

O P I N I O N



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

Your historical review on the Islamic State was illuminating. For those who did not see it, I suggest turning to page 22 of last week's *Nugget*. What we see today in the Middle East is a repeat of what has taken place in the past — there are many similarities as were pointed out in the article.

You can go back even further to 1802-05 and the First Barbary War and read what Thomas Jefferson said about negotiating with the Barbary States. Jefferson basically said there was no negotiating with them because they quoted the Koran as giving them authority to "plunder and enslave" the infidels. Sound familiar?

It took overwhelming force to stop radical Islam in the past, and if we study history it is pretty clear that we must do the same again. This time however, we must combine the use of force with the moderate states in the area committing to remove jihadist teachings from all mosques and schools across the Middle

East. We cannot have another generation growing up bent on death and destruction.

It will take removal of the jihadists as a viable role model, along with education and opportunity, for the next generation of Muslims to choose the path of peace. The U.S. has kept thousands of troops in Japan, Germany, and Korea, all of which are now safe and stable. We should expect to have to do the same in the Middle East.

The question is how much longer will we wait while this threat grows, gathers resources, and fresh recruits, before we put a stop to it? ISIS has seen a big increase in recruits because we allowed them to be successful. Conquering territory is a much better sales pitch for wannabe jihadists than the death and destruction they suffered last decade. The question is how many more Americans must die here in America before we act?

Carey Tosello

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Rain/Wind 48/32	Rain 40/29	Chance rain/snow 38/24	Rain/snow showers 38/24	Mostly cloudy 34/21	Mostly cloudy 38/na

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Robert B. Reich

American Voices

Just like that, Pfizer has decided it's no longer American. It plans to link up with Ireland's Allergan and move its corporate headquarters from New York to Ireland.

That way it will pay less in taxes. Ireland's tax rate is less than half that of United States. Ian Read, Pfizer's chief executive, told the *Wall Street Journal* the higher tax rate in the United States caused Pfizer to compete "with one hand tied behind our back."

Read said he'd tried to lobby Congress to reduce the corporate tax rate (now 35 percent) but failed, so Pfizer is leaving.

Such corporate desertions from the United States (technically called "tax inversions") will cost the rest of us taxpayers some \$19.5 billion over the next decade, estimates Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation. Which is fueling demands from Republicans to lower the corporate tax rate. Donald Trump wants it to be 15 percent. Mike Huckabee and Ted Cruz want to eliminate the corporate tax altogether.

Rather than lower corporate tax rates, an easier fix would be to take away the benefits of corporate citizenship from any company that deserts America.

One big benefit is the U.S. patent system that grants companies like Pfizer longer patent protection and easier ways to extend it than most other advanced economies.

In 2013, Pfizer raked in nearly \$4 billion on sales of the Prevnar 13 vaccine, which prevents diseases caused by pneumococcal bacteria, from ear infections to pneumonia. Pfizer is the only manufacturer of Prevnar 13.

Other countries wouldn't allow their patent systems to justify such huge charges. Neither should we — especially when Pfizer stops being an American company.

The U.S. government also protects the assets of American corporations all over the world.

In the early 2000s, after a Chinese company replicated Pfizer's formula for Viagra, the U.S. trade representative put China on a "priority watch list" and charged China with "inadequate enforcement" against such piracy. Soon thereafter the Chinese backed down. Now, China is

one of Pfizer's major sources of revenue.

But when Pfizer is no longer American, the United States should stop protecting its foreign assets.

Nor should Pfizer reap the benefits when the United States goes to bat for American corporations in trade deals.

In the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the upcoming deal with the European Union, the interests of American pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer — gaining more patent protection abroad, limiting foreign release of drug data, and preventing other governments from controlling drug prices — have been central points of contention. And Pfizer has been one of the biggest beneficiaries. From now on, it shouldn't be.

U.S. pharmaceutical companies rake in billions of dollars a year because Medicare isn't allowed to use its huge bargaining power to get lower drug prices. But a non-American company like Pfizer shouldn't get any of this windfall.

American drug companies also get a free ride off of basic research done by the National Institutes of Health. Last year, the NIH began a collaboration with Pfizer's Centers for Therapeutic Innovation, subsidizing Pfizer's appropriation of early scientific discoveries for new medications. In the future, Pfizer shouldn't qualify for this subsidy, either.

Pfizer has been among America's biggest campaign donors and lobbyists.

In 2014, it gave \$2,217,066 to candidates, according to OpenSecrets.org. (By contrast, its major competitor, Johnson & Johnson, spent \$755,000.) And Pfizer spent \$9,493,000 on lobbyists. So far in the 2016 election cycle, it's been one of the top 10 corporate donors.

But by deserting America, Pfizer relinquishes its right to influence American politics.

If Pfizer or any other American corporation wants to leave America to avoid U.S. taxes, that's their business. But they should no longer get any of the benefits of American citizenship — because they've stopped paying for them.

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