

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Security over privacy

We have all been horrified by scenes of carnage in places not much different than Keizer. Mass shootings have occurred in such varied cities as San Bernardino, Newton, Colorado Springs and Aurora.

editorial

Syed Farook's mother lived in the house with the couple and their six-month-old child. Investigators are currently trying to uncover what Rafia Farook knew—the couple had stockpiled weapons and were building pipe bombs in the house. For

cultural or familial reasons we can see why Mother Farook did not report anything, but political correctness stopped the neighbor from filing a report. The adage 'better safe than sorry' is as powerful today as ever.

The question of whether such a tragedy could happen in Keizer is as important as the question about preparedness by our law enforcement agencies, schools and gathering places such as shopping centers and churches.

It is not prudent for law enforcement to tip its hand and share its response plans in case of a mass shooting. The public should be confident, though, that all our local and state law enforcement agencies do have a plan in place. We want to be confident, also, that the school district has plans on how to respond to an active shooter in or near any school.

We certainly do not advocate creating Fortress Keizer, but as we've seen, these things can happen anywhere, anytime. We've seen that this can happen anywhere, anytime.

People that harbor the darkest of impulses can lurk anywhere, even the nicest and quaintest of communities. We shouldn't look over our shoulders in fear, nor expect the worst in others, but it is important for the public and law agencies to understand that a well-intentioned word can prevent a tragedy too hard to imagine.

—LAZ

It doesn't matter if the killings are a result of mental health, political or religious issues. The killings have occurred in places local residents later say, "I never thought it could happen here." That's the problem: it could and it did happen there. Though we live in our quiet little corner of Oregon here in Keizer, is it possible to say we could not suffer a similar tragedy?

We should not say, "It can't happen here." It can because we can never know what goes on in the hearts and minds of others. After each of the recent mass killings across the nation reports come out that someone suspected something but said nothing; or, someone felt someone was acting strangely and different than usual. In a society where privacy is paramount we are loathe to invade another's privacy.

After 9/11 the nation was told if you see something, say something. A neighbor of San Bernardino shooters Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik didn't report suspicious activity at their house because he didn't want to appear to be racially profiling or racist.

Could a report to police by the neighbor have stopped the massacre? That's unknown. All bets are off when terrorism hits the American heartland. Safety and security trumps privacy. It can be argued that at least one other person knew of any of the multiple shootings around the country.

## Trust him?

It is hard to ignore Donald Trump. It is foolhardy to think that in the end cooler heads will prevail and his presidential candidacy will collapse under the weight of his positions and pronouncements.

While Republican establishment candidates try to gain traction for their campaigns, the Trump juggernaut continues to grow. The people who attend his rallies and speeches like what they hear—he speaks to their fears and frustrations, even though he offers few specifics other than saying "trust me" and "it'll be great."

His call for a temporary halt in the acceptance of Muslim refugees into the United States "until we know what the hell is going on" fired up outrage from politicians and pundits, but his supporters continue their cheers.

Less than half of all eligible voters cast ballots anymore in national elections. The people who do vote are very motivated. If our democratic system results in the election of Donald Trump and his policies, that is a result Americans will have to accept.

We deserve more than "trust me."

—LAZ

## To the Editor:

Thirteen years ago Dr. Bud Pierce saved my life, so I certainly bear him no ill will—nor grudges due to his party affiliation, which he and I used to converse about during my course of treatment with him.

He and (wife) Selma have certainly done a lot for the citizens of Salem/Keizer; however, to name an actively campaigning politician as grand marshal of our hometown Christmas parade is simply wrong in so many ways.

How about our chief of police or

letters

fire captain or medics or the caregivers for our elderly? Or the teachers we entrust our kids too every day? All are heroes each and every day.

Maybe the citizens should be the ones to chose who they want to be grand marshal of their hometown parade.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all.

Carol Doerfler  
Keizer



## Patience is not a virtue vs. terror

By MICHAEL GERSON

In his address to the nation on terrorism, President Obama warned against "tough talk." On this, at least, no one can accuse him of hypocrisy.

In the aftermath of recent attacks, Obama perfunctorily ticked off a series of inputs: airstrikes, arming and training Iraqi and Syrian forces, cooperating with allies on counterterrorism and pursuing a cease-fire in the Syrian conflict. And then he issued this directive: "I've ordered the Departments of State and Homeland Security to review the visa-waiver program." Who at the White House thought it would be helpful for the commander in chief, after a terrorist attack on the American homeland, to order an interdepartmental review process?

Obama gave a speech of reassurance for a policy that appears to be collapsing. The Islamic State has solidified control of vast territory and is displaying many of the characteristics of an actual nation. It has attracted jihadists from around the world to the conflict in Syria and Iraq, many of whom will return home with deadly skills. With the Paris attacks, the Islamic State has demonstrated the strategic capacity to strike in Western capitals. It counts affiliates in about a dozen nations, including a particularly successful Libyan branch operation. And it has become a rallying point for self-radicalization, as close as a Facebook pledge of allegiance.

Before the events of the last few weeks, it might have been possible to argue that Obama's anaconda plan of slow strangulation could work in, say, five years. But is the threat revealed in Paris and elsewhere acceptable for five

other views

years? In this case, patience is a dangerous course.

In his speech, Obama talked of a 65-nation coalition

fighting the Islamic State and claimed that France, Germany and the United Kingdom "have ramped up their contributions to our military campaign." But when France decided to take action after the Paris attacks, it invoked an obscure passage of the European Union treaty to avoid a NATO commitment that might offend Russia and imply American leadership. Germany has tested the boundaries of its constitution to make a small military contribution (six planes and 1,200 soldiers) in solidarity with France, not the U.S. And America has generally rejected the Eisenhower role of supreme commander in a coalition of the willing—constrained by political commitments ("no boots on the ground") and highly restrictive rules of engagement.

Obama's strategy has many elements that any future president, Republican or Democrat, would adopt. The only things missing are urgency and leadership. The president should convene his security team and ask: What would it take to degrade the Islamic State's capabilities to strike in the west within one year? And to defeat it completely in two? Then the president should assemble a coalition sufficient to that task, comprised of forces from European allies, boots on the ground from Sunni nations and a more aggressive U.S. support role (much larger special forces to assist on

the frontlines, forward air controllers, relaxed rules of engagement).

Obama is correct that a parallel political track is essential. Syria will require a Lebanon-like peace, in which minorities (including the Alawites) are granted protection and power. It will be necessary to somehow re-convince the Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq that, if they fight the Islamic State, they will find protection and fair treatment in a unified country, instead of living under Shiite despotism.

The complexity of this military and diplomatic task would challenge any president. It is pretty much inconceivable that the "ender of wars" would suddenly assume this role in his seventh year in office. Obama has consistently done the minimal amount necessary to avoid the charge of fecklessness.

Obama's call for tolerance of the Islamic faith is more than minimal; it is essential. But even this is put at risk by the broader crisis. "A continued failure to recognize the scale of the challenge and to construct the means necessary to meet it," says Britain's former Prime Minister Tony Blair, "will result in terrorist attacks potentially worse than those in Paris, producing a backlash which then stigmatizes the majority of decent, law-abiding Muslims and puts the very alliance so necessary at risk, creating a further cycle of chaos and violence."

This is the challenge of America's involvement in the Middle East. Because it is politically unpopular, there is a natural temptation to disengage. But after attacks, engagement will come—with more anger, on worse terms.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## I never want to see my dentist again

By DON VOWELL

All I got for Christmas was a new front tooth. So far. Actually I needed only to replace a chunk that broke out on the back side of the tooth. It takes the discipline of a Zen Master to keep your tongue from ceaselessly probing, massaging, and exploring the jagged edge of a crater in the back side of your tooth. That discipline is beyond me.

I called the dentist soon after the chunk went missing. I shudder to think where it might have gone. Hopefully it's not lodged in some far-flung intestinal crevasse. My ordinary practice is to wait until my face is swelling before I actually make a dental appointment, but my restless tongue couldn't just leave it be.

There are a lot of reasons not to go to a dentist. The first is discomfort. My chosen dentist is the least threatening dentist in Oregon and has never caused me any pain. A wonderful man, he moves slowly, precisely and gently. He also explains every step before he goes forward. But there is more to pain than pain. There is also anxiety that there could soon be pain. With all that skull-ringing drilling and grinding, and the forced air and water spraying rotted tooth fragments all over your mouth it is not so far-fetched to believe that you are one tiny slip from bloody agony. It could happen.

By the way, whatever happened to the little rinse and spit basin? A little slosh of water allowed you to clear the grit and spit it out. Modern practice has a cheerful assistant operating a wet vac just before the point where collected saliva and

a box of soap

construction debris is about to overflow down your gullet. This has the advantage of allowing the dentist

to keep your mouth open for up to half a workday. If you helpfully try to open very wide you quickly get jaw fatigue. It's too bad you have to have your mouth open to get your teeth fixed. With so many medical miracles now in everyday use you'd think someone would develop arthroscopic dentistry. A tiny probe equipped with cute little tools and a camera could just be slipped between your lips.

Dentistry is an assault on all your senses. Some of the compounds and amalgams they use have an odd, sweet antiseptic smell. Some of the stuff they remove before all that may be a little foul. But it is the noise that keeps me from ever wanting to go back. Perhaps if my head had a little more solid content it would reverberate less like the sound box of a quality acoustic instru-

ment. When I was a child the drills turned at a low RPM and made your head vibrate with a grinding noise. Now it is more often the very high-speed drills that make a lovely high-pitched shriek/whine. Now there's progress.

There is something wrong with insurance. If I had to choose, I'd rather have enough sound teeth to eat rather than, say, keep my appendix. I don't know what my appendix does but I know I like to eat. If my appendix was surgically removed, (with no terror-inducing drilling and sucking noises), insurance would pay for the whole procedure. Yet typical insurance companies pay dentists at 1950s rates. Even if there is something wrong with you and you like going to the dentist you can't ignore the price you must pay.

I do have the best dentist in Oregon. I hope I never see him again. (Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the Keizertimes.)



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