

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## We must not live in fear of ISIS

President Obama's Sunday televised address was what the nation needs to hear. The president's words established a perspective that is essential for moving forward out of strength, not fear.

It was especially important that Obama reminded the nation of all the military action that is presently underway in Syria. And it was essential that he explained the logic of why it would be stupid for America to commit ground troops to Syria. We did that in Iraq and we know where it leads. Moreover, as the president explained, a large continent of American ground troops in Syria is exactly what ISIS wants to see.

In the days following 9/11, one of the smartest and best things that President George W. Bush did was to remind Americans that it would be wrong to persecute or discriminate against American Muslims because of the attack on the World Trade Center. President Obama reasserted that essentially American concept — that we are a nation of many religions. And that what he called “the

perversion of Islam” is being carried out by a very small fraction of the worldwide population of Muslims.

It has always been absurd that non-military people could acquire weapons that are meant for military use — assault weapons. It is shameful that too many in Congress are more in thrall of the National Rifle Association's mistaken priority than they are in keeping Americans safe. The president asked Congress once again to move on that front.

Britain taught us during World War II that a nation under attack must not give in to fear. We must emulate that example.

The president is right that ISIS is “on the wrong side of history.” Moreover, there is no higher message in what they are doing. They are, in the president's words, “thugs and killers — part of a cult of death.”

## Pearl Harbor Day has meaning in 2015

On the wall of a conference room in our building there is a framed front page of this newspaper from Sept. 11, 2001. Over a photo of the burning World Trade Center is a headline: “Day of Infamy.” That headline was a direct borrow from this day in history — Dec. 7, 1941 — also known as Pearl Harbor Day. In the draft of President Franklin Roosevelt's speech to a joint session of Congress, the phrase is “A day that will live in history.” Roosevelt crossed out “history” and inserted “infamy.”

If you travel to Pearl Harbor, you will see tangible evidence of that awful moment when waves of Japanese war planes sprayed bullets and dropped bombs on America's Pacific Fleet.

It is easy for us — 74 years later — to see Pearl Harbor in the larger context of American resourcefulness and industrial might that defeated the Axis powers of Japan, Germany and

Italy. At the time, of course, it took a great communicator like Roosevelt to buoy his nation's optimism and sell the belief that it eventually would triumph.

There is a lesson in that for America in 2015. The threat of terrorism in the Middle East, Europe and the U.S. easily strikes fear in the heart of many Americans. But as FDR reminded the nation on another occasion, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Presidential candidates who are selling fear-based strategies do this nation no good. They also sell America and the courage of Americans short.

The urge right now to demonize all Americans who are Muslims is the worst sort of demagoguery. Pandering to fear is not leadership.

Basing life on fear is not healthy for a person or for a nation. The persistence of courage was the best response to Pearl Harbor.

**FYI:** Clippings from the press of the Pacific Northwest and the nation

## Exxon gets it; GOP doesn't

No one would confuse the oil and gas giant with the Sierra Club. But if you visit Exxon's website, you will find that the company believes climate change is real, that governments should take action to combat it and that the most sensible action would be a revenue-neutral tax on carbon — in other words, a tax on oil, gas and coal, with the proceeds returned to taxpayers for them to spend as they choose.

But to today's Republicans,

ExxonMobil's moderate, self-evident views are akin to heresy. Donald Trump, the leading GOP presidential candidate, says, “I don't believe in climate change.” Sen. Ted Cruz (Tex.) says, “Climate change is not science, it's religion.” Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla.) at the moment seems to acknowledge that climate change might be real but opposes any action to deal with it.

— Fred Hiatt in *The Washington Post*

## Republicans' climate change denial denial

By PAUL KRUGMAN  
*New York Times News Service*

Future historians — if there are any future historians — will almost surely say that the most important thing happening in the world during December 2015 was the climate talks in Paris.

True, nothing agreed to in Paris will be enough, by itself, to solve the problem of global warming.

But the talks could mark a turning point, the beginning of the kind of international action needed to avert catastrophe.

Then again, they might not; we may be doomed. And if we are, you know who will be responsible: the Republican Party.

OK, I know the reaction of many readers: How partisan! How over the top! But what I said is, in fact, the obvious truth. And the inability of our news media, our pundits and our political establishment in general to face up to that truth is an important contributing factor to the danger we face.

Anyone who follows U.S. political debates on the environment knows that Republican politicians overwhelmingly oppose any action to limit emissions of greenhouse gases, and that the great majority reject the scientific consensus on climate change. Last year PolitiFact could find only eight Republicans in Congress, out of 278 in the caucus, who had made on-the-record comments accepting the reality of man-made global warming. And most of the contenders for the Republican presidential nomination are solidly in the anti-science camp.

What people may not realize, however, is how extraordinary the GOP's wall of denial is, both in the U.S. context and on the global scene.

I often hear from people claiming that the American left is just as bad as the right on scientific issues, citing, say, hysteria over genetically modified food or nuclear power. But even if you think such views are really comparable to climate denial (which they aren't), they're views held by only some people on the left, not orthodoxies enforced on a whole party by what even my conservative colleague David Brooks calls the “thought police.”

And climate-denial orthodoxy doesn't just say that the scientific consensus is wrong. Senior Republican members of Congress routinely indulge in wild conspiracy theories, alleging that all the evidence for climate change is the product of a giant hoax perpetrated by thousands of scientists around the world. And they do all they can to ha-

## No, Donald Trump won't win the race

By DAVID BROOKS  
*New York Times News Service*

A little while ago I went rug shopping.

Four rugs were laid out on the floor and among them was one with a pink motif that was dazzlingly beautiful. It was complex and sophisticated.

If you had asked me at that moment which rug I wanted, I would have said the pink one.

This conviction lasted about five minutes. But then my mentality flipped and I started asking some questions. Would the furniture go with this rug? Would this rug clash with the wall hangings? Would I get tired of its electric vibrancy?

Suddenly a subtler and more prosaic blue rug grabbed center stage. The rugs had not changed, but suddenly I wanted the blue rug. The pink rug had done an excellent job of being eye-popping on its own. The blue rug was doing an excellent job of being a rug I could enjoy living with.

For many Republicans, Donald Trump is their pink rug. He does the job that they want done at this moment. He reflects their disgust with the political establishment. He gives them the pleasurable sensation that somebody can come to Washington, kick some tail and shake things up.

But decision-making is a journey, not an early December snapshot. It goes in stages.

The campaign may seem old, but we are still in the casual attention stage. Every four years voters ask Iowa and New Hampshire voters when they made up their minds. Roughly 70 or 80 percent make up their minds in the final month of the race. Up



Francois Mori/AP Photo

Anne Hidalgo, mayor of Paris, center, poses for a group picture with Michael R. Bloomberg U.N. Secretary General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, with mayors from various cities during a meeting with Mayors at Paris city Hall as part of the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Paris, Friday.

rass and intimidate individual scientists.

In a way, this is part of a long tradition: Richard Hofstadter's famous essay “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” was published half a century ago. But having that style completely take over one of our two major parties is something new.

It's also something with no counterpart abroad.

It's true that conservative parties across the West tend to be less favorable to climate action than parties to their left. But in most countries — actually, everywhere except America and Australia — these parties nonetheless support measures to limit emissions. And U.S. Republicans are unique in refusing to accept that there is even a problem. Unfortunately, given the importance of the United States, the extremism of one party in one country has enormous global implications.

By rights, then, the 2016 election should be seen as a referendum on that extremism. But it probably won't be reported that way. Which brings me to what you might call the problem of climate denial denial.

Some of this denial comes from moderate Republicans, who do still exist — just not in elected office. These moderates may admit that their party has gone off the deep end on the climate issue, but they tend to argue that

it won't last, that the party will start talking sense any day now. (And they will, of course, find reasons to support whatever climate-denier the GOP nominates for president.)

Everything we know about the process that brought Republicans to this point says that this is pure fantasy. But it's a fantasy that will cloud public perception.

More important, probably, is the denial inherent in the conventions of political journalism, which say that you must always portray the parties as symmetric

### How partisan! How over the top!

— that any report on extreme positions taken by one side must be framed in a way that makes it sound as if both sides do it. We saw this on budget issues, where some self-proclaimed centrist commentators, while criticizing Republicans for their absolute refusal to consider tax hikes, also made a point of criticizing President Barack Obama for opposing spending cuts that he actually supported. My guess is that climate disputes will receive the same treatment.

But I hope I'm wrong, and I'd urge everyone outside the climate-denial bubble to frankly acknowledge the awesome, terrifying reality. We're looking at a party that has turned its back on science at a time when doing so puts the very future of civilization at risk. That's the truth, and it needs to be faced head-on.

until then they are busy with life and work and just glancing at the campaign. If you ask them which candidate they support, that question may generate an answer, but that doesn't mean they are actually committed to electing the name they happen to utter.

Over at the FiveThirtyEight blog, Nate Silver looked at campaign-related Google searches in past years in the weeks before the Iowa caucuses. Until a week or two before the caucuses very few people are doing any serious investigations of the candidates. Then just before and after the caucuses voters get engaged and Google searches surge.

Silver produced a chart showing what this year's polling would look like if we actually took the current levels of casual attention and uncertainty seriously. In that chart “Undecided” had 80 percent support. Trump had 5 percent support; Carson, 4; Cruz, 3; and Rubio, 2.

That's about the best description of where the Republican race is right now.

Just because voters aren't making final decisions doesn't mean they are passive. They're in the dressing room. They're trying on different outfits. Most of them are finding they like a lot of different conflicting choices.

Human beings have multiple selves. The mind dances from this module to that module. When Montaigne tried to describe his mind, he wrote,

“I cannot keep my subject still. It goes along befuddled and staggering, with a natural drunkenness.” In one mood Trump seems pretty attractive to some people. In another it's Carson, or Cruz or Rubio.



David Brooks

But in the final month the mentality shifts. The question is no longer, What shiny object makes me feel good? The question is, Who do I need at this moment to do the job? Different sorts of decision-making styles kick in.

For example, there are two contrasting types of decision-making mentalities, maximizing and satisficing.

If you're choosing a marriage partner, you probably want to maximize. You want to find the very best person you are totally in love with. You'll need that passion to fuse you two together so you can survive the tough times. You want somebody who can inspire and be a messenger to your best future.

But politics is not like that. Politics is a prosaic activity most of the time. You probably want to satisfice, pick the person who's good enough, who seems reasonably responsible.

When campaigns enter that final month, voters tend to gravitate toward the person who seems most orderly. As the primary season advances, voters' tolerance for risk declines. They focus on the potential downsides of each contender and wonder, Could this person make things even worse?

When this mental shift happens, I suspect, Trump will slide. All the traits that seem charming will suddenly seem risky. The voters' hopes for transformation will give way to a fear of chaos. When the polls shift from registered voters to likely voters, cautious party loyalists will make up a greater share of those counted.

The voting booth focuses the mind. The election is no longer about self-expression and feeling good in the moment. It's about the finger on the nuclear trigger for the next four years. In an era of high anxiety, I doubt Republican voters will take a flier on their party's future — or their country's future.

**All the traits that seem charming will suddenly seem risky.**