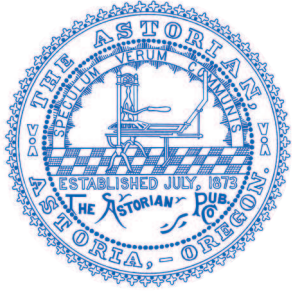


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW

‘Resolve to solve’ is the resolution leaders should make

Each year, countless Americans and businesses make resolutions for the coming year, everything from individuals wanting to lose weight and join a gym to businesses wanting to be more productive and profitable.

At The Daily Astorian we’ve made ours, and they are centered on our readers, website visitors and our advertisers rather than ourselves. We will strive to serve each reader, visitor and customer better than we have before to meet increasing expectations in print and on our website, provide excellent customer service in all aspects and remain faithful to our core values.

For the coming year we’ve resolved to be even more of an active and representative regional voice and be a more inclusive advocate for those who live and work throughout Clatsop County and the Long Beach Peninsula in Washington.

We will also continue to pay special attention to topics that include: The Housing Crunch, the area’s No. 1 concern; local and state political dysfunction and the use of scarce tax dollars; children’s well-being in all matters; emergency preparedness, planning and preparation that can save lives; environmental issues like climate change and natural resources; timber, forestry, fishing, the oyster industry and waterway issues, all of which greatly impact our area; mental health treatment and the need for greater standards of care; and homelessness and the need for strategies to help those who need it.

‘Resolve to solve’

While those are our resolutions, we hope those in state and local political leadership make a few and keep them too. They include:

- For all state and local leaders to adopt a simple motto for themselves to “resolve to solve” problems.
- For Gov. Kate Brown to resolve to become a more visible, problem-solving leader for all Oregonians as she was elected to be. With the next legislative session only weeks away, Brown needs to step up and be at the forefront of finding and advocating solutions for longstanding issues. Those include reforms of the enormously underfunded Public Employees Retirement System; state taxation and revenue generation; sustainable funding for education, transportation and infrastructure improvements; and raising the bar for the leadership in key state agencies to solve performance, personnel and functionality problems that have been highlighted in recent state audits. Brown has an enormous career opportunity that many in the political arena aspire to have but haven’t achieved. We hope that like an esteemed conductor of a world-class symphony Brown is able to rise above past performance and be a maestro for the work that needs to be done.

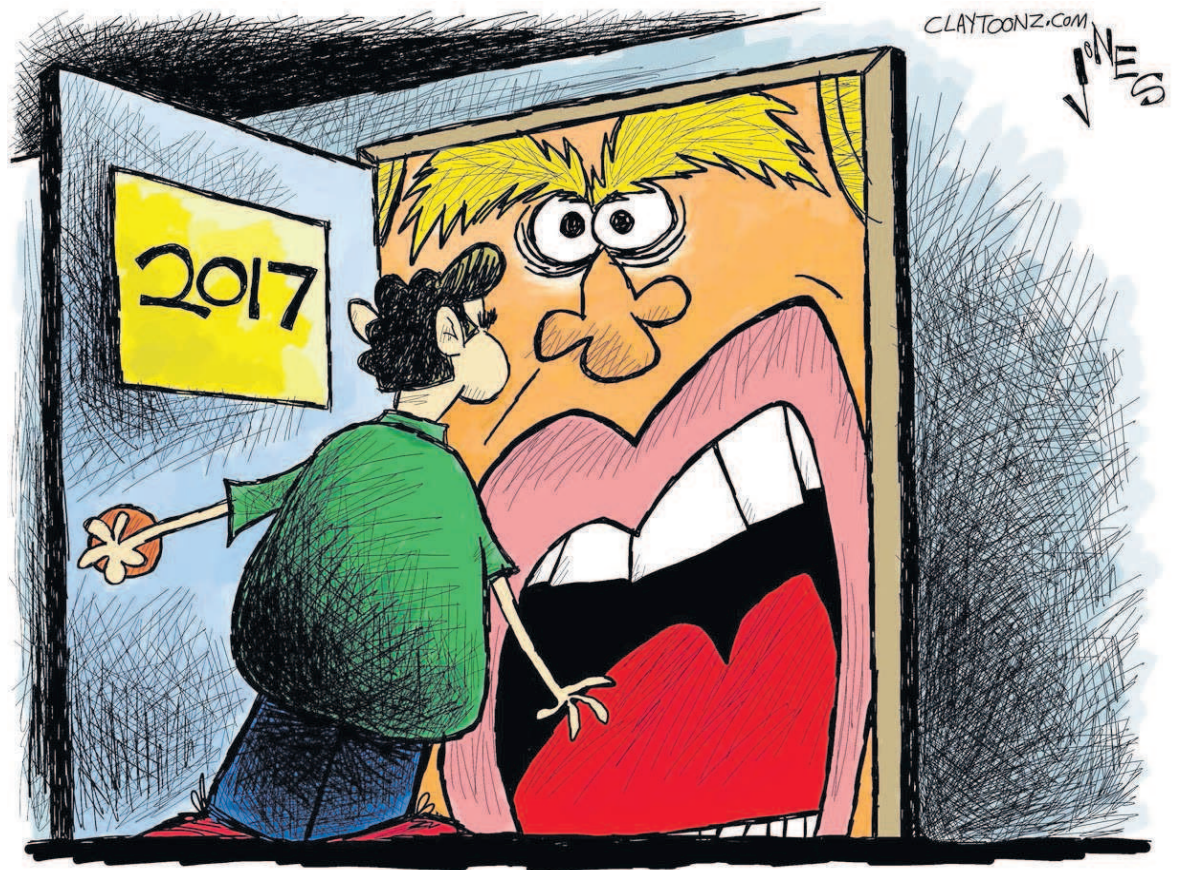
- For Oregon state representatives and senators, who like the governor, need to resolve to put their partisanship aside during the upcoming session and seek solutions. Voters in the last election made it abundantly clear they’re tired of seeing politicians kick the can down the road for others to solve sometime in the future while they continue to push their own personal agendas in the present.

Closer to home

- We hope each of our local governments resolve to work together more diligently to develop solutions for common problems like housing, economic development and emergency preparedness that exist on a regional basis. Individually and collectively, they need to be thinking strategically and comparing notes to get results that can raise the quality of life throughout the region. We also hope that in-fighting and grandstanding between members of some of those entities — and between some of the entities themselves — comes to an end. They need to stop wasting the public’s time and to show far more professionalism and civility in their interactions with each other. They also need to remember that their duty is to serve the public rather than themselves. The premise that when interests conflict individual members of some of those boards resort to lobbying insults at each other or at staff rather than working together, or that some of those entities would use scarce tax dollars and human resources to pursue litigation against each other rather than negotiate settlements isn’t in anybody’s best interest.

- And finally, for taxpayers to resolve to hold our leaders at all levels more accountable, and to mandate that they put performance above partisanship when making decisions on the issues that impact each of our lives.

Voters in the last election made it abundantly clear they’re tired of seeing politicians kick the can down the road.



President Obama’s final, shameful legacy moment



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster
 President Barack Obama addresses the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s annual Policy Conference opening plenary session in 2012 in Washington. “When the chips are down, I have Israel’s back.”

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

“When the chips are down, I have Israel’s back.”

— Barack Obama, AIPAC conference March 4, 2012

WASHINGTON — The audience — overwhelmingly Jewish, passionately pro-Israel and supremely gullible — applauded wildly. Four years later — his last election behind him, with a month to go in office and with no need to fool Jew or gentile again — Obama took the measure of Israel’s back and slid a knife into it.

People don’t quite understand the damage done to Israel by the U.S. abstention that permitted passage of a Security Council resolution condemning Israel over settlements. The administration pretends this is nothing but a restatement of long-standing U.S. opposition to settlements.

Nonsense. For the last 35 years, every administration, including a re-election-seeking Obama himself in 2011, has protected Israel with the U.S. veto because such a Security Council resolution gives immense legal ammunition to every boycotter, anti-Semite and zealous European prosecutor to penalize and punish Israelis.

A pariah

An ordinary Israeli who lives or works in the Old City of Jerusalem becomes an international pariah, a potential outlaw. To say nothing of the soldiers of Israel’s citizen army. “Every pilot and every officer and every soldier,” said a confidant of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, “we are waiting for him at The Hague.” I.e., the International Criminal Court.

Moreover, the resolution undermines the very foundation of a half-century of American Middle East policy. What becomes of “land for peace” if the territories Israel was to have traded for peace are, in advance, declared to be Palestinian

land to which Israel has no claim?

The peace parameters enunciated so ostentatiously by Secretary of State John Kerry on Wednesday are nearly identical to the Clinton parameters that Yasser Arafat was offered and rejected in 2000 and that Abbas was offered by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2008. Abbas, too, walked away.

Kerry mentioned none of this because it undermines his blame-Israel narrative. Yet Palestinian rejectionism works. The Security Council just declared the territories legally Palestinian — without the Palestinians having to concede anything, let alone peace.

The Temple Mount is the most sacred site in all of Judaism. That it should be declared foreign to the Jewish people is as if the Security Council declared Mecca and Medina to be territory to which Islam has no claim.

The administration claims a kind of passive innocence on the text of the resolution, as if it had come upon it at the last moment. We are to believe that the ostensible sponsors — New Zealand, Senegal, Malaysia and a Venezuela that cannot provide its own people with toilet paper, let alone food — had for months been sweating the details of Jewish housing in East Jerusalem.

Nothing new here, protests dep-

uty national security adviser Ben Rhodes: “When we see the facts on the ground, again deep into the West Bank, beyond the separation barrier, we feel compelled to speak up against those actions.”

This is a deception. Everyone knows that remote outposts are not the issue. Under any peace, they will be swept away. Even the right-wing Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who lives in one of these West Bank Settlements, has stated publicly that “I even agree to vacate my settlement if there really will be a two-state solution.” Where’s the obstacle to peace?

Obstacle to peace

A second category of settlement is the close-in blocs that border 1967 Israel. Here, too, we know in advance how these will be disposed of: They’ll become Israeli territory and, in exchange, Israel will swap over some of its land to a Palestinian state. Where’s the obstacle to peace here?

It’s the third category of “settlement” that is the most contentious and that Security Council resolution 2334 explicitly condemns: East Jerusalem. This is not just scandalous; it’s absurd. America acquiesces to a declaration that, as a matter of international law, the Jewish state has no claim on the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, indeed the entire Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. They belong to Palestine.

The Temple Mount is the most sacred site in all of Judaism. That it should be declared foreign to the Jewish people is as if the Security Council declared Mecca and Medina to be territory to which Islam has no claim. Such is the Orwellian universe Israel inhabits.

At the very least, Obama should have insisted that any reference to East Jerusalem be dropped from the resolution or face a U.S. veto. Why did he not? It’s incomprehensible — except as a parting shot of personal revenge on Benjamin Netanyahu. Or perhaps as a revelation of a deep-seated antipathy to Israel that simply awaited a safe political interval for public expression.

Another legacy moment for Barack Obama. And his most shameful.