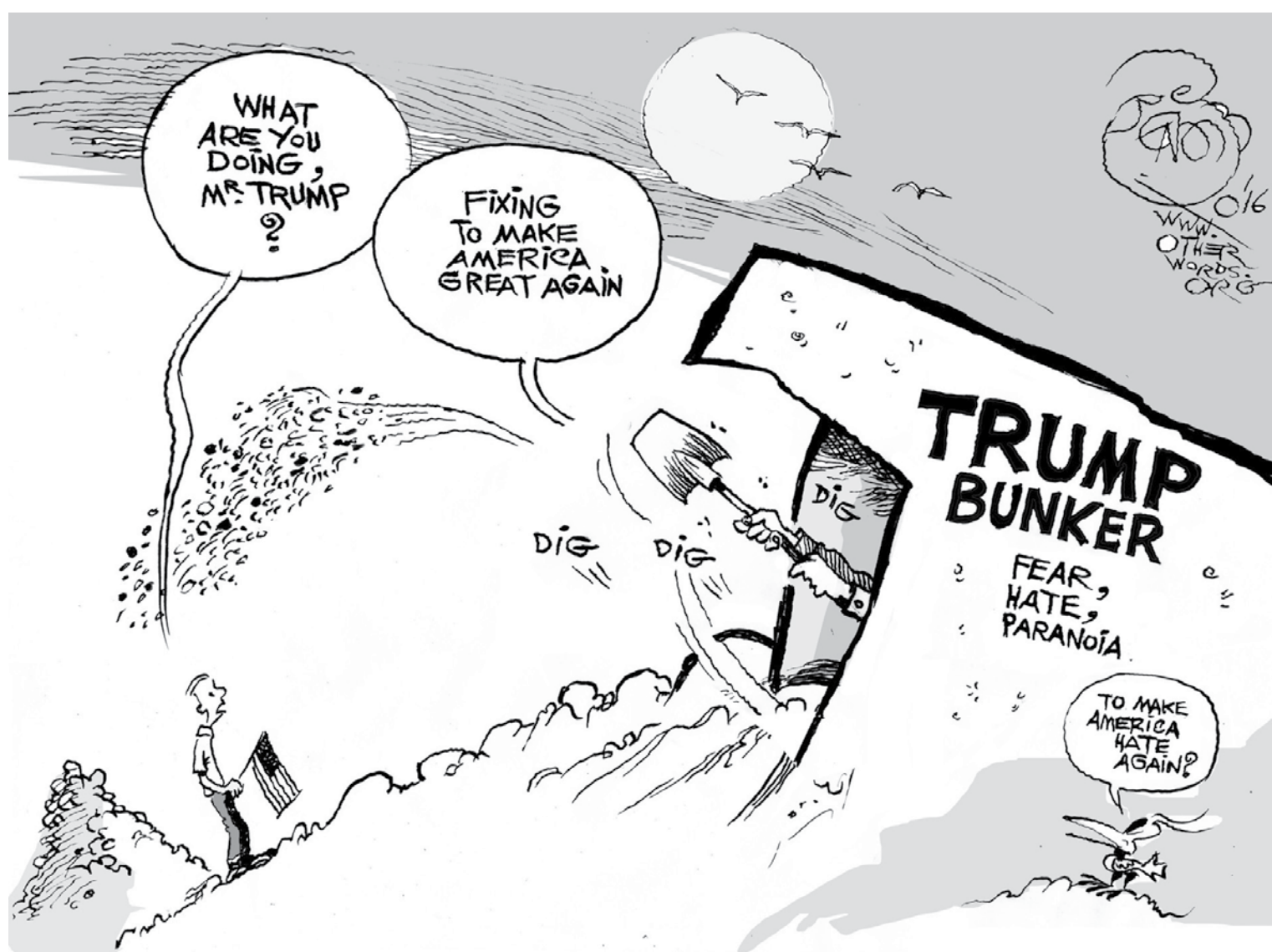


## OPINION



## Sacrifice Muslim Soldier Shouldn't Have Had to Make

## Clinton's record is much bloodier

BY PETER CERTO

It was impossible not to be moved as Khizr and Ghazala Khan, two Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, stood before the Democratic National Convention and mourned their son Humayun, a U.S. soldier who'd been killed in Iraq.

Humayun, his grieving father recalled, was "the best of America." Yet if it were up to Donald Trump, Khan said, the slain soldier "never would have been in America." It was a compelling rebuke to the GOP nominee's unrepentant calls to banish Muslims and immigrants alike.

Trump, in his fashion, responded poorly. The billionaire insisted that, like the Khans, he's "made a lot of sacrifices." He sneered that perhaps the bereaved Ghazala had remained silent on stage because "she wasn't allowed" to talk.

It was sad and ugly. But amid the word salad was a kernel of truth: "Hillary voted for the Iraq war," Trump cried, "not me!"

There at least, he wasn't wrong.

As a senator from New York, Clinton not only voted for the war, but was among its most vocal supporters in either party, eagerly rehashing the Bush administration's claims that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction.

"I stand by the vote," Clinton told the Council on Foreign Relations in late 2003, when those weapons had failed to materialize. Six months later, Humayun Khan was killed by a car bomb in Iraq. He was one of 4,424 U.S. soldiers to die in that war — along with perhaps up to a million Iraqi civilians.

The war in which Khan gave his life has been a political football for so long that it's become hard to appreciate just what an enormous catastrophe it was — and remains. The invasion exploded sectarian tensions across the Middle East and led directly to the rise of ISIS.

As the worst refugee cri-

sis since World War II unfolds across the Middle East and Europe — and as ISIS terrorists murder innocents from Baghdad to Belgium to San Bernardino — the gaping wound we opened in Iraq sits beneath it all like a black hole, eviscerating human lives at a ferocious speed even 13 years later.

Yet as late as her first presidential bid, Clinton refused to apologize for supporting the invasion. If you're looking for "someone who did not cast that vote or has said his vote was a mistake," she told Democratic voters in 2007, "there are others to choose from."

As her polling numbers soured, Clinton eventually did cop to making a "mistake" on Iraq. But that didn't stop her, once she joined Obama's administration, from supporting escalation in Afghanistan, deeper involvement in Syria, and intervention in Libya's civil war, which also ended disastrously.

As a presidential candidate this year, Clinton remains committed to launching a "no-fly zone" in Syria. What could go wrong?

Well, in Iraq, a no-fly zone gave way to a full-scale invasion. In Libya, it gave way to regime change and a civil war. Both countries became basket cases and ISIS strongholds, leading the Obama administration to launch new wars in each afterward — most recently with a huge U.S. bombing raid on Sirte, Libya.

Is there any reason to expect Syria to turn out better?

Clinton's rhetoric on the Muslim world might be friendlier than Trump's, but her record is much bloodier. Even while she condemns Trump's erratic statements on foreign policy, there's no evidence she sees any need to redraw her own hawkish playbook.

The Humayun Khans of America, who freely offer their lives to protect their country, deserve a better approach — one based on diplomacy and human rights. And so do the millions of people of the Middle East, Muslim and otherwise.

*OtherWords.org editor Peter Certo writes about foreign policy for the Institute for Policy Studies.*



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