

TERROR: ‘Unless you clearly identify your enemy, then you cannot ... defeat that enemy’

Continued from 1A

and is perceived globally,” said Trevor McCrisky, a professor at Britain’s University of Warwick who has studied Obama’s foreign policy rhetoric.

The early January attacks on a French satirical newspaper and kosher deli put a fresh spotlight on what Obama’s supporters see as his appropriately careful language and his critics see as overly cautious.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the attacks that left 17 people dead suggested the world was “waging a war against Islamist extremists.” And British Prime Minister David Cameron, on a visit to Washington two weeks ago, said Europe and the U.S. face a “very serious Islamist extremist terrorist threat.”

Obama, however, assiduously avoided associating the attacks with Islam, a decision White House spokesman Josh Earnest said was made for the sake of “accuracy.”

“These are individuals who carried out an act of terrorism, and they later tried to justify that act of terrorism by invoking the religion of Islam and their own deviant view of it,” Earnest said. “We also don’t want to be in a situation where we are legitimizing what we consider to be a completely illegitimate justification for this violence, this act of terrorism.”

Obama’s conservative opponents quickly seized on the president’s rhetorical choice and cast it as an example of the White House downplaying the root cause of the terror threat. At least one Democrat — Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, an Iraq war veteran — agreed, saying the president’s terror terminology matters, particularly as Congress weighs a new authorization for military action in Iraq and Syria.

“By his not using this term ‘Islamic extremism’ and clearly identifying our enemies, it raised a whole host of questions in exactly what Congress will be authorizing,” Gabbard said on Fox News. “Unless you understand who your enemy is, unless you clearly identify your enemy, then you cannot come up with a very effective strategy to defeat that enemy.”

Similarly, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, who until last year was director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told a conference in Washington last week that “you cannot defeat an enemy you do not admit exists.”

The president has long tried to shift his administration’s terror rhetoric away from what he saw as the hyperbolic terminology used by his predecessor, George W. Bush, particularly his declaration in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that the U.S. was engaged in a “war on terror.”

In a high-profile national security address in 2013, Obama declared, “We must define our effort not as a boundless ‘global war on terror,’ but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America.”

Under Obama’s narrower definition, his advisers say the U.S. is at war with terror groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates, as well as the Islamic State group.

Given the U.S. policy of not making concessions to terrorists, the White House has refused to negotiate with Islamic State militants to free American hostages and opposes Jordan’s ongoing efforts to orchestrate a prisoner swap with the group. However, the U.S. did negotiate with the Taliban through an intermediary last year to free American Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl in exchange for five Afghan detainees at the Guantanamo Bay prison.

The White House insisted anew this week that those negotiations did not violate U.S. policy because the administration does not classify that Taliban as a terrorist organization — though officials said there are overlapping characteristics.

“They do carry out tactics that are akin to terrorism. They do pursue terror attacks in an effort to try to advance their agenda,” Earnest, the White House spokesman, said. The difference, he said, is that the Taliban threat to the U.S. is mainly confined to interests in Afghanistan, while a group like al-Qaida has broader ambitions.

Yet even the administration’s classifications of the Taliban have some contradictions.

The Afghan Taliban is not on the State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, thereby allowing the White House to engage in the negotiations for Bergdahl. Yet the Treasury Department does list the Afghan Taliban on the list of specially designated terrorists, giving the U.S. the ability to freeze the assets of the group and its members.

Associated Press writers Ken Dilanian in Washington and Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

Consumers fuel steady U.S. economy

By JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — There’s a good reason the U.S. economy is impressing the world right now despite a slowdown in the final three months of 2014: In a word, steadiness.

Companies have been hiring at healthy rates for the past year. Layoffs hover near historic lows. Auto sales are strong. Gas prices have sunk. Congressional budget fights have faded. Americans are increasingly confident.

All that fed a surge of consumer spending last quarter, offsetting weaker business spending caused in part by a pullback by oil drillers and a frail global economy.

The U.S. economy as a whole expanded at a 2.6 percent annual rate, the government said Friday, down from a sizzling 5 percent gain the previous quarter. Yet consumers signaled their optimism by spending at the fastest rate in nearly nine years.

“This hasn’t changed my picture on the strength and resilience of the U.S. economy,” said Scott Anderson, chief economist at the Bank of the West. “Almost all the



AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee

BurgerFi restaurant employee Nathali Dorvil calls out an order Tuesday as Elia Carranza, rear, mans the grill at the Aventura, Fla., restaurant. The company plans to nearly double in size from their existing 65 restaurants this year.

drivers of consumer spending are pointing in the right direction.”

Nearly six years into the recovery from the Great Recession, the economy has finally gone from straining just to grow to posting consistently solid gains. The gains have come even though many households continue to struggle without much of a financial cushion. Nearly half say they spend all their income, go into debt or use savings to meet their expenses, a new analysis by the Pew Charitable Trusts has found.

In addition, a surging dollar is denting the earnings of U.S. companies that operate overseas. And energy firms have been hurt by plummeting oil prices, and as a result companies in the Standard & Poor’s 500 index are expected to report weak profit growth.

But collectively, consumers and investors are showing renewed faith in the economy.

On Friday, the University of Michigan said its sentiment index found that U.S. consumers are more confident than they’ve been

since 2004. Also Friday, the government said wages and benefits are ticking up, a sign that steady job gains may be compelling employers to pay a bit more.

Most indicators suggest that the economy has surpassed a psychological threshold that has made businesses more comfortable with hiring and infused consumers with more enthusiasm.

“Psychology has been a big contributor to the improved level of performance in the United States,” said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at the bank Northern Trust.

At a time when Europe, Asia and South America face deep anxieties, the U.S. economy’s greatest strength might be its remarkable sturdiness.

The consensus expectation is that the U.S. economy will expand a solid 3 percent this year, well above the recovery’s 2.2 percent annual average. This has made U.S. stocks and Treasuries comparably attractive — havens from the risks from Europe’s prolonged slump, collapsing oil prices, China’s slowdown and Japan’s struggles to stave off recession.

BRIEFLY

More measles cases found in California

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More measles cases have been found in California, health officials said Friday. Figures released by the California Department of Public Health showed there are now 91 confirmed cases in the state, up from 79 on Wednesday.

Of those, 58 infections have been linked to visits to Disneyland or contact with a sick person who went there.

Mexico and at least six other U.S. states — Utah, Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Nebraska and Arizona — also have recorded measles cases connected to Disneyland.

The outbreak, which

originated at Disney theme parks last month, is spreading to the broader community.

Measles, which is spread through the air, is highly contagious. Symptoms include fever, runny nose and a blotchy rash.

Most young children are vaccinated against measles. But outbreaks still occur in the United States, usually when travelers pick up the virus abroad and then spread it among unvaccinated people here.

People at highest risk are those who are unvaccinated, pregnant women, infants under 6 months old and those with weakened immune systems.

Health officials have not found “patient zero” or the person who triggered the Disneyland-linked outbreak.

But they think it’s someone who caught the virus outside the country and visited one of the Disney theme parks during the holidays.

Last year, the U.S. saw a record 644 measles infections in 27 states after virtually eliminating the disease in 2000.

California typically sees four to 60 cases a year.

Romney bows out of 2016 campaign before getting in

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mitt Romney ended his rollercoaster return to presidential politics on Friday, declaring his party would be better served by the “next generation of Republican leaders” and concluding his unlikely comeback as suddenly as

it began.

Aides said it was a deeply personal and even painful decision for the 2012 Republican presidential nominee. He insisted he could win the next election if he ran, but his announcement followed a three-week fact-finding effort that revealed significant resistance to a third campaign.

“I believe that one of our next generation of Republican leaders, one who may not be as well-known as I am today, one who has not yet taken their message across the country, one who is just getting started, may well emerge as being better able to defeat the Democrat nominee,” Romney told supporters on a conference call. “In fact, I expect and hope that to be the case.”

IF YOU WERE SEVEN YEARS OLD,
COULD YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

WHAT’S FOR SALE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

With sweet flavoring to mask tobacco’s harsh taste, cheap prices, and bright and colorful packaging, it’s even hard for adults to tell the difference between tobacco and candy. Is it any wonder ninety percent of smokers start before they are eighteen?

SMOKEFREE oregon

LEARN MORE

SMOKEFREEOREGON.COM

#WHATSFORSALE

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Smokefree Oregon is an Oregon Health Authority initiative.

Happy New Year

From Dr. Hibbert,
Lacee, Jessica, Bailey,
Heather, and Sarah

541-612-3707

BUCKAROO BOOSTER CLUB FUNDRAISER

Dinner and Auction

Over \$30,000 in auction items up for bid

Cracked Crab • Baked Salmon • Tri-Tip Steak • Complimentary Beer

Wednesday, February 11th • \$25 per person
Dinner 6-7:30 pm • Auction 7:00 pm
Pendleton Convention Center
Limited to first 500 tickets sold

Tickets available at Big John's Pizza, Pendleton Athletic and Dave's Food Mart. Must be 21 & over to attend

Presented by:

PENDLETON ELECTRIC

MC LAUGHLIN LANDSCAPING

Robert Alan Pratt DMD, PC

36TH ANNUAL
HERMISTON SPORTS BOOSTERS
STEAK FEED & AUCTION

Saturday, March 7th • 5:30pm
Auction starts at 7:00pm
Hermiston Community Center

For table reservations,
call Paul 541-701-4518 or for
more info., call Joe 541-567-5811

Everyone 21 years & over welcome.
All proceeds will assist Hermiston High School boys and girl athletic programs.

\$40 per person

This ad generously donated by
RDO EQUIPMENT CO.
a proud community supporter

HERMISTONSPORTSBOOSTERS.COM