

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

Tip of the hat to Heidi Sipe, superintendent of the Umatilla School District, who was chosen as the 2016 Oregon Superintendent of the Year.

Sipe received the award earlier this week at the Oregon School Boards Association conference in Portland. She has been leading the school district located along the Columbia River since 2007, and the state honor now puts her in the running for National Superintendent of the Year.

“Heidi is an outstanding educational leader with a deep commitment to equity and a strong belief in the promise and potential of each and every child,” said Salam Noor, Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction.

We’ve been reporting on Sipe for nearly a decade, noting her work in a district where nearly 90 percent of students qualify for free or reduced meals. Roughly one in three of her students is still learning the English language.

It’s a hard job, and Sipe has worked hard at it. She deserves the honor.



Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Obama refugee argument fails as Democrats desert

By **JOSH LEDERMAN** and **KATHLEEN HENNESSEY**
Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — As anxiety about Syrian refugees entering the U.S. took hold this week, President Barack Obama was having none of it. Halfway across the globe, he scolded politicians questioning his plan to take in 10,000 Syrians in light of the Paris attacks, dismissing them as fear-mongers scoring political points.

Obama’s dressing down was biting, passionate and quotable. It was also risky.

Justified or not, fears of terrorism spreading from the war-ravaged Middle East to U.S. shores are not limited to the president’s political opponents. What to some was a skillful takedown of a dangerous canard could also be viewed as a flip dismissal of legitimate and widespread anxiety

“Apparently, they’re scared of widows and orphans coming into the United States of America,” Obama said, in a dig aimed at Republicans.

But many Democrats weren’t buying what he said. In a major embarrassment for Obama, 47 Democrats abandoned the lame-duck president Thursday as the House approved fresh barriers for Syrian and Iraqi refugees trying to enter the United States.

Democrats complained that top administration officials who were sent to Capitol Hill to calm fears had failed make a convincing argument. “I’ve seen better presentations in my time,” Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., said.

In surveys conducted since IS extremists killed 129 in Paris, Americans have expressed broad concern that they or their families could fall victim to terrorism, and overwhelming support for ramped-up security checks in public places. Many have said they favor a halt to Syrian refugees entering the homeland — at least temporarily.

Their concerns have been echoed by presidential candidates, lawmakers from both parties, and the more than half of U.S. governors who have raised concern about Syrian refugee resettlement.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, the third-ranking Senate Democrat, has said a pause in accepting Syrian refugees may be needed.

Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid and Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin have called for strengthening the vetting process, and Gov. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., called for a total halt until the government can show the screening is as strong as possible.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on the Senate’s intelligence panel, joined a Republican colleague’s call for restricting visas for anyone recently in Iraq or Syria.

“It is against the values of our nation and the values of a free society to give terrorists the opening they are looking for” by not tightening entry restrictions, House Majority Leader

Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said before Thursday’s vote.

Driving concerns is the prospect that terrorists might use Obama’s refugee program to enter the United States and launch an attack, although the legitimacy of that threat has been tough to determine.

A Syrian passport was found near one of the attackers in Friday’s attacks, but a top German official later said it might have been a fake designed to stoke apprehension about refugees. Such apprehension has already taken hold across much of Europe, where many countries have started closing or tightening their borders.

On one level, it was unsurprising that Obama reacted as strongly as he did. Just two months ago, Obama took heat for not doing more to help desperate, displaced families fleeing a war that has haunted his presidency. The images of a drowned boy washed up on the shore became a symbol of the West’s failure. Obama pledged to accept roughly 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year.

The rapid shift in other direction struck administration officials as particularly short-sighted. Obama, attending back-to-back summits in Turkey and the Philippines, followed the debate at home as it spiraled almost overnight.

The global response to IS has been a dominant theme in Obama’s meetings with world leaders in both countries, and as he met with the Philippine leader on Wednesday, Obama mocked GOP leaders for talking tough and said their offensive rhetoric could be a potent recruitment tool for terrorists.

“They’ve been playing on fear in order to try to score political points or to advance their campaigns,” Obama said.

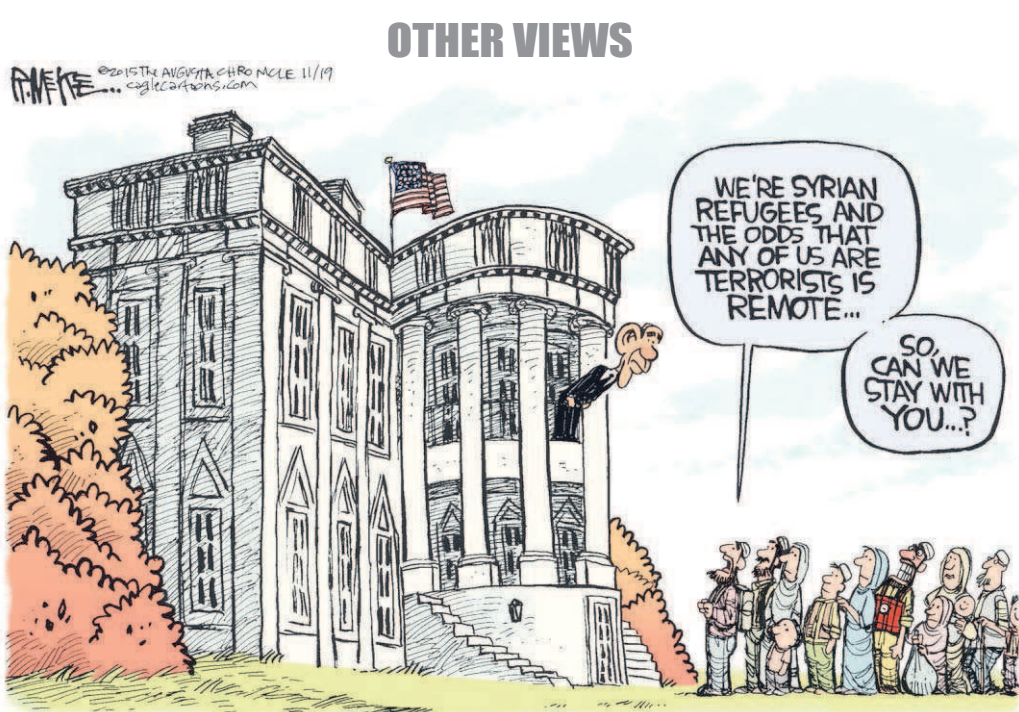
There were signs Thursday the White House had recognized the issue’s potential for sounding off-key. It mounted a public relations campaign, enlisting top officials to explain the rigors of the screening process. White House chief of staff Denis McDonough briefed House Democrats before Thursday’s vote, spoke to wary governors, published a blog post detailing the vetting system and scheduled a conference call so Americans could hear about it first-hand.

Hosting a chat on Twitter, White House spokesman Josh Earnest fielded a question from user Keith White, @keethers: “I feel conflicted. But should the President address the nation directly? Lay out the vetting process to reassure the American people?” The spokesman replied in a far softer tone than Obama had the day before: “Understandable — but refugees are subjected to most intense/rigorous screening of anyone entering US.”

Obama got support from Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton in opposing refugee restrictions. “We cannot allow terrorists to intimidate us into abandoning our values and our humanitarian obligations,” she said.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



In debate, Democrats views unchanged by Paris carnage

If, before the Democratic presidential debate in Iowa Saturday night, a Republican operative had been told that, in the wake of the Paris attacks: 1) Hillary Clinton would refuse to apply the phrase “radical Islam” to ISIS; 2) Bernie Sanders would maintain that climate change is a greater threat to national security than ISIS or Islamic terrorism in general; and 3) Martin O’Malley, with Clinton’s agreement, would insist that the U.S. stick to a proposal to admit 65,000 Syria refugees into the country — he would have been delighted at the prospect of future ads portraying Democrats as in denial about the threat Islamic radicalism poses to the United States.

1) Clinton and “radical Islam.” Moderator John Dickerson asked whether the former secretary of state agreed with Marco Rubio’s use of the phrase “radical Islam” to describe ISIS and other terrorist groups. “Do you agree with that characterization, radical Islam?” Dickerson asked.

“I don’t think we’re at war with Islam,” Clinton said. “I don’t think we are at war with all Muslims. I think we’re at war with jihadists who have —”

“Just to interrupt,” Dickerson said. “He didn’t say all Muslims. He just said radical Islam. Is that a phrase you don’t —”

Clinton conceded that “you can talk about Islamists who clearly are also jihadists,” but stuck to her position that using the phrase “radical Islam” would somehow implicate all Muslims in terrorist violence. Moments later, Sanders and third candidate Martin O’Malley also declined to use “radical Islam.”

2) Sanders and climate change. In the first Democratic debate, Sanders was asked the greatest national security threat facing the United States.

“The scientific community is telling us that if we do not address the global crisis of climate change, transform our energy system away from fossil fuel to sustainable energy, the planet that we’re going to be leaving our kids and our grandchildren may well not be habitable,” Sanders said. “That is a major crisis.”

On Saturday night, Dickerson asked Sanders if, after Paris, he still believes climate



BYRON YORK
Comment

change is the nation’s greatest national security threat.

“Absolutely,” Sanders answered. “In fact, climate change is directly related to the growth of terrorism. And if we do not get our act together and listen to what the scientists say, you’re going to see countries all over the world — this is what the CIA says — they’re going to be struggling over limited amounts of water, limited amounts of land to grow their crops. And you’re going to see all kinds of international conflict.”

Sanders conceded that “international terrorism is a major issue” that must be addressed. But he steadfastly stuck to his view that the bigger threat remains climate change.

3) O’Malley and refugees. Dickerson reminded O’Malley that he has urged the Obama administration to accept 65,000 Syrian refugees; did that number still stand in light of Paris?

“I was the first person on this stage to say that we should accept the 65,000 Syrian refugees that were fleeing the sort of murder of ISIL,” O’Malley said. “And I believe that that needs to

be done with proper screening.”

A moment later, Clinton agreed. “The administration originally said (10,000),” she said. “I said we should go to 65, but only if we have as careful a screening and vetting process as we can imagine, whatever resources it takes.” Insistence on the highest level of vetting seemed an admission that admitting the refugees — some of whom might not actually be refugees — poses a security threat to the United States. But Clinton held firm.

So back to Republicans. GOP strategists, and the ads they make, can now accurately say Democrats will not recognize radical Islam, even after the carnage in Paris; will insist that climate change remains the nation’s greatest security threat, even after the carnage in Paris; and remain determined to admit large numbers of Syrian refugees into the United States, even after the carnage in Paris. The words spoken at Saturday night’s debate will reverberate through the presidential campaign.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Horse meat has nutritional value, should not be wasted

A recent article indicated the Bureau of Land Management would be rounding up 1,400 horses in the Beatys Butte Management Area. Most of the animals will spend the rest of their lives in holding pens at a cost of about \$1,000 per year per horse.

The BLM is presently holding more than 47,000 animals at an annual cost of \$49 million. In addition there are presently more than 31,000 horses exceeding the BLM Appropriate Management Level and they should be removed. They are also reproducing at about 20 percent a year.

Another article indicated 10 percent of Oregon children are suffering from hunger. Health officials claim children afflicted by poor nutrition are at greater risk for obesity, mental and emotional problems, and frequently fail to thrive academically. A lack of protein is most significant.

I had the pleasure of eating a horse meat dinner in Iceland recently. Recalling having eaten horse meat in the 1940s I found the experience even more enjoyable than when I was a kid. An Icelandic internist I met cited the nutritional factors that made horse meat superior to beef and didn’t understand why we did not eat horse meat. I explained that during World War II we ate horse meat but have found fattened beef to be more tasty.

One of Mother Teresa’s more famous quotes, when asked what could be done to help poor children, was to “do what is in front of you.” What do I see in front of me? We have holding pens full of high quality meat that cost taxpayers \$49 million last year. Officials I know associated with the food bank tell me meat is the most difficult commodity to obtain. Here is an opportunity for the Oregon Food Bank to get about 500 pounds of meat per animal.

I know Congress has said that horses are not to be sold for slaughter, but for Congress to deprive hungry children meat from these

surplus horses would seemingly fall in line with the French Royalty who were quoted, “Let them eat cake.”

Carlisle Harrison
Hermiston

Technology addicts need local treatment options

Methamphetamine has become an epidemic in our area, yet how many can easily spot a comparable evil in our homes? Electronic addiction deserves our focus just as much as drugs, and possibly even more.

While you can strive to keep meth out of your home and away from your family, how realistic is it to shelter them from unhealthy levels of pixelated stimulation? As easy as it is for addicts to find drugs, it is even easier for them to access social media.

Defining where moderate use crosses the line into addiction is subjective, yet the warning signs are there. I see people driving with their faces staring down into their laps. Some are even mothers with car seats full of precious cargo on board their minivans. Each is a danger to every innocent life in our society.

I myself have fallen asleep while on medical transportation only to awake and find the driver checking his emails and playing casino-style video games as we ride Interstate 84 to Portland. I have four children and I’d like to see them grow up. I want to live!

Even those wise enough to abstain from driving while using electronics may still suffer.

How can you really interact with other human beings when your neck is constantly strained as the pixels suck you in hour after hour?

Please, I urge any of you who struggle with technology to seek out addiction services. We have some wonderful faith-based programs in the area.

Carlin Sacco
Pendleton