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OUR VIEW

Pearl Harbor Day has meaning in 2015

There are a handful of snippets from presidential speeches that every American knows. There's "fourscore and seven years ago," "ask not what your country can do for you," and, of course, "I am not a crook."

But Franklin Roosevelt may be the most quoted president, of the last century, at least. And for good reason. He not only had the benefit of speaking at a time when all of America was listening closely, but he knew how to deliver a message that would stick.

Today marks the anniversary of his speech following the Dec. 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack that touched off U.S. involvement in World War II.

In the draft of FDR'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, nearly two presidential terms before Pearl Harbor, "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.

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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.

YOUR VIEWS

Not all statue candidates fit Pendleton's theme

I truly agree with the editorial in the December 5 *East Oregonian*: "Statues are built to appeal to tourists, not locals."

Since the city wishes to maintain a western motif, the choice of the next two bronze statues would best illustrate that editorial position if Poker Jim and Aura Goodwin Raley were selected.

I wish the community could have had some input in this selection of bronze statues. There are a number of other historical Pendleton figures (and animals) the public might have suggested. It would be good to have another woman and man to equal the total of four of each.

Aura Goodwin Raley's first husband was a founder of Pendleton with his hotel near the Umatilla River. After his death she remarried and, in those frontier days, became known as "The Mother of Pendleton."

Poker Jim was a respected Indian chief and brought his people to celebrate the first Round-Up in 1910. Since that time the local tribes have been an important part of the Round-Up and Happy Canyon.

The other figures listed are important but do not fit as nicely into the history of Pendleton and the western theme. Let's have some letters and opinions from the public about the selection of bronze statues.

Still, in the back of my mind are the unpaved streets. They seem more important to the public than more statues. Let's get them fixed for Christmas!

Dr. Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton

COP-21 should be on everyone's agenda

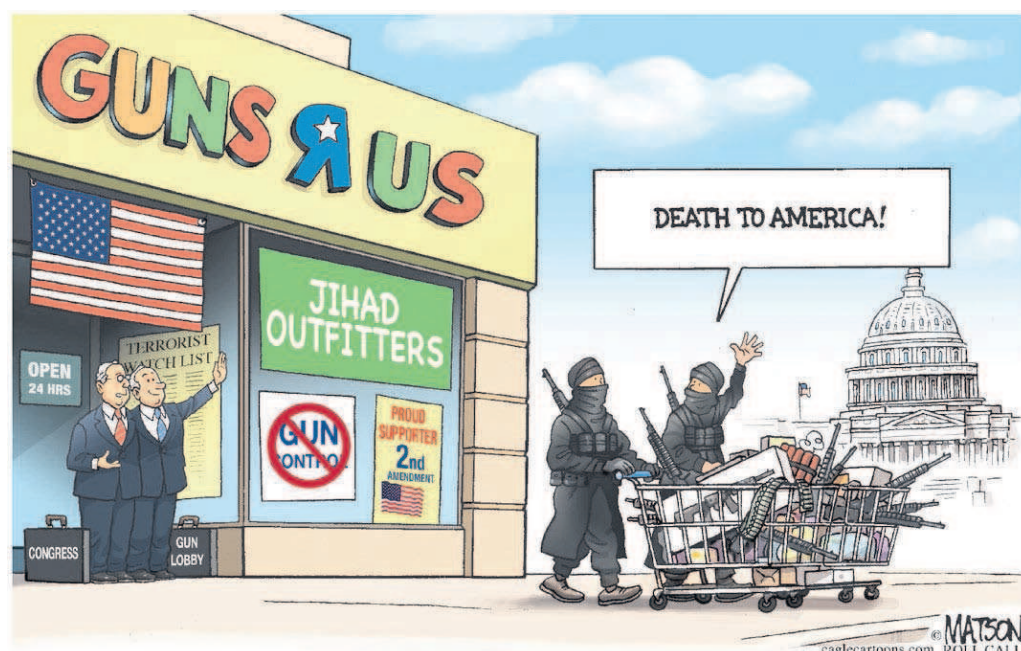
This week is the beginning of an extremely important event, COP-21, better known as the Paris Climate Conference. The purpose behind COP-21 is to agree on a plan to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of CO2. This year's conference is crucial because this last November highlights the first time the total atmospheric concentration of carbon has been above 400ppm.

The overall take from this is that our planet is changing. Our world is becoming warmer, which leads to climate change. Some side effects to climate change include the rise of sea levels, species extinction, drought, and many other catastrophic weather disturbances. People are being forced to leave their homes because there is no more food, clean drinking water, or arable land to grow their crops.

Larry Minthorn
Pendleton

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. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



"IF WE STOP SELLING GUNS AND EXPLOSIVES TO TERRORISTS, THE TERRORISTS WIN!"

OTHER VIEWS

Liberalism's gun problem

I do not own guns, and the last time I discharged a firearm was on "Second Amendment Day" at a conservative journalism program many years ago. (Yes, dear reader, that's how conservative journalism programs roll.) My political commitments are more communitarian than libertarian, I don't think the Constitution guarantees a right to bear every kind of gun or magazine, and I think of myself as modestly persuadable in the gun control debate.

Of course that doesn't mean I really am, since we're all tribal creatures and gun rights advocates are part of my strange and motley right-wing tribe. But at the very least I understand why the idea of strict gun control has such a following, why it seems to many people like the obvious response to mass shootings — whether the perpetrators are ISIS sympathizers, mad right-wingers, or simply mad — and why the sorrowful public piety of Republican politicians after a gun massacre drives liberals into a fury.

That fury, though, needs a little more cool reasoning behind it. It's fine to demand actions, not just prayers, in response to gun violence. But today's liberalism often lacks a clear sense of which actions might actually address the problem — and, just as important, a clear appreciation of what those actions might cost.

Sometimes, it's suggested that all we need are modest, "common-sense" changes to gun laws: Tighter background checks, new ways to trace firearms, bans on the deadliest weapons.

This idea was the basis for the Manchin-Toomey bill that failed in 2013 in the Senate. It was also, though, the basis for two major pieces of gun legislation that passed in the 1990s: The Brady Law requiring background checks for handguns and the assault weapons ban.

Both measures were promoted as common-sense reforms — in the case of the Brady Law, by none other than Ronald Reagan. But both failed to have an appreciable impact on homicides — even as other policies, like hiring more police officers, probably did. That double failure, some gun control supporters will tell you, has to do with the loopholes those two laws left open — particularly the fact that individuals selling guns aren't required to run background checks when they sell within their home state.

But that claim's very plausibility points to the problem: With 300 million guns in private hands in the United States, it's very difficult to devise a nonintrusive, "common-sense" approach to regulating their exchange by individuals. Ultimately, you need more than background checks; you need many fewer guns in circulation, period. To their credit, many gun control supporters acknowledge this point, which is why there is a vogue for citing



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

the Australian experience, where a sweeping and mandatory gun buyback followed a 1996 mass shooting.

The clearest evidence shows that Australia's reform mostly reduced suicides — as the Brady law may have done — while the evidence on homicides is murkier. (In general, the evidence linking gun ownership rates to murder rates is relatively weak.) But a lower suicide rate would be a real public health achievement, even if it isn't immediately relevant to the mass shooting debate.

Does that make "getting to Australia" a compelling long-term goal for liberalism? Maybe, but liberals need to count the cost.

With 300 million guns in private hands in the United States, it's very difficult to devise a nonintrusive, "common-sense" approach to regulating their exchange by individuals.

Absent a total cultural revolution in America, a massive gun collection effort would face significant resistance even once legislative and judicial battles had been won. The best analogue is Prohibition, which did have major public health benefits ... but which came at a steep cost in terms of police powers, black markets and trampled liberties.

I suspect liberals imagine, at some level, that a Prohibition-style campaign against guns would mostly involve busting up gun shows and disarming Robert Dear-like trailer-park loners. But in practice it would probably look more like Michael Bloomberg's controversial stop-and-frisk policy, with a counterterrorism component that ended up heavily targeting Muslim Americans. In areas where gun ownership is high but crime rates low, like Bernie Sanders' Vermont, authorities would mostly turn a blind eye to illegal guns, while poor and minority communities bore the brunt of raids and fines and jail terms.

Here the relevant case study is probably not Australia, but France. The French have the kind of strict gun laws that American liberals favor, and they have fewer gun deaths than we do. But their strict gun laws are part of a larger matrix of illiberalism — a mix of Bloombergist police tactics, Trump-like disdain for religious liberty, and campus-left-style restrictions on free speech. (And then France also has a lively black market in weaponry, which determined terrorists unfortunately seem to have little difficulty acquiring.)

Despite their occasional sympathies for Gallic socialism, I don't think American liberals necessarily want to "get to France" in this illiberal sense.

But to be persuasive, rather than just self-righteous, a case for gun control needs to explain why that isn't where we would end up.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. His column appears every Sunday. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The Atlantic*.

Revenue forecast is only silver lining on dark clouds

The (Medford) Mail Tribune, Dec. 6

Lawmakers are upbeat about last week's revenue forecast, which predicts the state's income will increase slightly, because the Legislature won't have to back away from spending increases approved during this year's session. But while the current two-year budget is sound, the state is facing a massive hole when legislators start work on the next budget in 2017.

That's because the Oregon Supreme Court struck down significant portions of Public Employee Retirement System reforms enacted in 2013. The result of that ruling, as *The Oregonian* reported last week, is that the pension system's unfunded liability has nearly doubled, and is likely to exceed \$20 billion by the end of this year.

The bills don't start coming due until 2017, but they are coming, and the result will not be pretty.

The state's public employers combined will need to come up with \$800 million in pension contributions in the next biennium starting in 2017, \$860 million in 2019 and \$930 million in 2021, *The Oregonian* reported.

That means, among other things, that school districts won't have as much to spend on teachers, school days and reducing class sizes, cities and counties will have less for police officers and firefighters, and state

agencies will have to lay off staff or leave positions unfilled.

But we're not hearing much discussion of addressing this reality starting in the 2016 legislative session, because the PERS bill won't come due until the following year. Lawmakers are not fond of facing budget shortfalls until they absolutely have to, which is one reason the state tends to lurch from crisis to crisis with periods of calm in between.

Local governments and school districts are being warned to prepare themselves for the hit to their budgets starting in 2017. Lawmakers, too, should prepare, by resisting the urge to spend that increased state revenue in 2016 and instead bank it for the following year, when there will be less to work with.

An initiative petition backed by unions and others intended for the November 2016 ballot would increase taxes on large corporations, raising an estimated \$2.5 billion a year — enough to cover the increase in PERS costs and still provide more money for schools and other public services. Whether that is a good idea is a topic for another day; signatures are still being collected.

But regardless of whether new revenue is raised, Oregon's pension system still has years of increasing costs ahead of it, and state leaders should prepare for that now rather than later.