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OUR VIEW

International trade agreement will avert chaos

Anyone who doubts the value of comprehensive international trade agreements should go to France.

That nation recently prohibited the importation of cherries from any nation that allows the use of the insecticide dimethoate. Mind you, the insecticide doesn't have to be used on cherries; just the fact that it could be used in the U.S. is sufficient for French officials to block U.S. cherries.

We won't comment on French politics. All we know is the French do not allow their farmers to use dimethoate, so they decided no one should.

The fact that U.S. cherry growers don't use it is immaterial, according to French reasoning. They figure that if French farmers can't use it, nobody can.

Because only a relative handful of U.S. cherries — about a half a million dollars worth last year — goes to France, the impact will likely be small.

But what would happen if every country started making up its own trade rules, based on the vagaries of local preferences?

The answer is chaos. If Nation A won't allow a crop because a certain pesticide is allowed elsewhere, what's to stop Nations B, C and D from doing the same — adding pesticides or practices to the list?

Soon U.S. farmers who ship their crop overseas would face a gridlock of prohibitions. So would other

farmers around the world.

Before long, trade would grind to a halt. Ultimately, food shortages would emerge, but not until irreversible damage had been done to farmers and ranchers.

All because an agreement that sets the ground rules for trade does not exist.

Many critics of the TTIP have emerged in Europe and elsewhere. They prefer the current system, which appears to rely on sticking it to the U.S. whenever and wherever possible.

It's not just about the French and cherries. U.S. olive oil is slapped with a \$1,680 per ton duty when entering the European Union. Compare that to the \$34 a ton duty the U.S. charges for European olive oil entering this country.

U.S. apples face a 7 percent duty when going to Europe, while EU apples face no duty when imported

into the U.S.

Now in the negotiation stage is the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the U.S. and the European Union. Besides addressing market access and tariffs, it would harmonize regulatory standards, such as those related to food safety and the use of pesticides.

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Like the Trans-Pacific Partnership that was completed last winter, the TTIP will not be perfect. But it will be much better than the alternative, which is chaos.

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.

Culture Corner

School segregation was something we were supposed to have left behind.

Along with Jim Crow laws and poll taxes, school segregation is supposed to be a vestige of America's racist past, something that was tidily eradicated with *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act.

New York Times Magazine writer Nikole Hannah-Jones has made a career out of exploring the adverse effects of segregation, with two recent pieces providing a deep explorations into how a series of policy decisions and court rulings have largely re-segregated many of the country's school systems.

Hannah-Jones recently won the George Polk Award for "The Problem We All Live With," a 2015 report she did for the public radio program *This American Life*.

Hannah-Jones' story is set in the Normandy School District, a school system that borders Ferguson, Missouri.

Poorly funded, poor performing and largely black, Normandy lost its accreditation in 2012, giving its students the option to transfer to an accredited district.

Following Missouri state law, Normandy provided busing to Francis Howell, a majority white school district 26 miles away.

What followed was a massive resistance from Francis Howell administrators and parents.

Although Hannah-Jones wrote about Normandy in 2014 for *ProPublica*, the audio telling of the story is rendered

more powerful as clips from a Francis Howell public forum on the matter show parents angrily predicting that Normandy students will bring crime and ignorance to their community's schools.

Living in a liberal enclave of a liberal city doesn't prevent segregation either, as Hannah-Jones details in the June New York Times Magazine article "Choosing a School for my Daughter in a Segregated City."

Hannah-Jones, who is African-American, deftly blends her personal experiences with segregation's larger implications as she details her and her husband's tough decision to send their daughter to Brooklyn's Public School 307, a school heavily comprised of black and Latino students, only to see the same political lines drawn when New York City Public Schools considered sending some children from an affluent white school to P.S. 207.

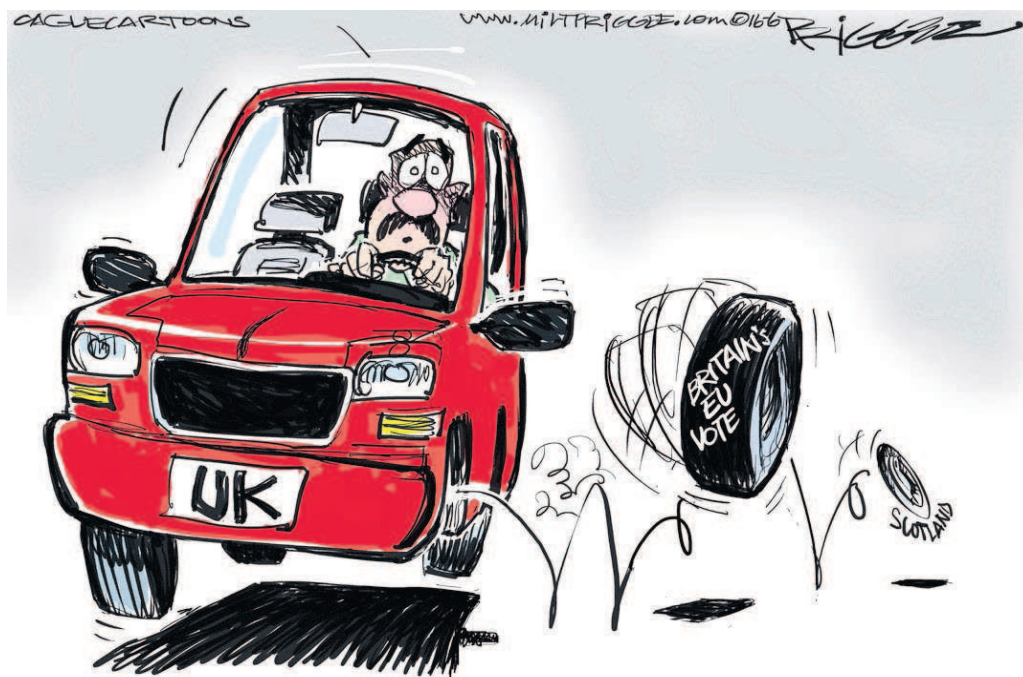
Hannah-Jones backs her story up with hard facts about the power of integration, citing research that shows that not only do black students perform better when attending a desegregated school, they're healthier, wealthier, less likely to be in jail and more likely to attend college.

Both stories tacitly ask the same question: Although we may approve of integrated schools in theory, what happens when it's brought to our front door?

— Antonio Sierra,
Pendleton reporter

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.



OTHER VIEWS

Blood on Obama's hands

ON THE GUATEMALAN-MEXICAN BORDER — Cristóbal, a 16-year-old Honduran refugee fleeing a drug gang that wants to kill him, has never heard of anyone named Barack Obama. Neither can he name the Mexican president, Enrique Peña Nieto.

But Cristóbal, along with many others, could end up being murdered because of these two presidents he is unaware of. Obama and Peña Nieto have cooperated for two years to intercept desperate Central American refugees in southern Mexico, long before they can reach the U.S. border. These refugees are then typically deported to their home countries — which can be a death sentence.

"If I'm sent back, they will kill me," says Cristóbal, who is staying temporarily at a shelter for unaccompanied migrant kids in Mexico. He says he was forced to work for the gang as a cocaine courier beginning at age 14 — a gun was held to his head, and he was told he would be shot if he declined. He finally quit and fled after he witnessed gang members murder two of his friends. Now the gang is looking for him, he says, and it already sent a hit team to his home.

Yet he may well be sent back under a policy backed by Obama and Peña Nieto. I admire much about the Obama administration, including its fine words about refugees, but this policy is rank with deadly hypocrisy.

In effect, we have pressured and bribed Mexico to do our dirty work, detaining and deporting people fleeing gangs in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. This solved a political crisis Obama faced with refugees in 2014, but it betrays some of the world's most vulnerable people.

The American-Mexican collusion began in 2014 after a surge of Central Americans crossed into the U.S., including 50,000 unaccompanied children. Obama spoke with Peña Nieto "to develop concrete proposals" to address the flow. This turned out to be a plan to intercept Central Americans near Mexico's southern border and send them home.

Washington committed \$86 million to support the program. Although Obama portrayed his action as an effort to address a humanitarian crisis, he made the crisis worse. The old routes minors took across Mexico were perilous, but the new ones adopted to avoid checkpoints are even more dangerous.

The victims of this policy, deported in some cases to their deaths, are refugees like Carlos, a 13-year-old with a scar on his forehead from the time a gang member threw him to the ground in the course of executing his uncle. I met Carlos in Mexico after he had fled — on his own — from Honduras to save his life.

"In my hometown, I was asked to join a gang," Carlos told me. "They wanted me to be a lookout. They said if I didn't, they would kill me and my brother." His brother is just 6



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

years old. Two of Carlos' classmates, both 14, were also asked to join the gang but refused. Their corpses were found with the number 13 carved in their chests, a reference to the gang's name. Another classmate, Alan, 13, was invited to join the gang and accepted. Carlos said Alan's first assignment was to murder three men.

Here on the Mexican-Guatemalan border I've heard many stories like Carlos' and Cristóbal's. The details are typically impossible to confirm, but I approached the youths rather than the other way around, and Carlos was initially reluctant to share the story; at one point he cried when he spoke of the murder threat against his brother.

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earlier, and the Obama administration heralds this as a success.

"It's been a good thing, because it's discouraging people from making a very dangerous trip," said a senior State Department official who would speak only anonymously.

It's true that the old system, of refugees undertaking a dangerous journey across Mexico, was awful. But we took a deplorable situation and made it more appalling.

So what should the U.S. do? Most important, it must work at the highest levels with Honduras and El Salvador to address the chaos in those countries, particularly because the U.S. bears some responsibility for the problems: The Central American street gangs were born in the United States and traveled with deportees to countries like El Salvador.

Instead, as with Syria, Obama has been disengaged. The U.S. could also do more to encourage Mexico to screen refugees rigorously and provide asylum to those who deserve it; instead, according to Human Rights Watch, less than 1 percent of Central American children in Mexico receive refugee status or formal protection.

I asked Salva Lacruz, coordinator of a human rights center in Tapachula, about Obama's eloquent speeches on refugees and immigration. "It's just words," he scoffed. "A lot of hypocrisy."

Carlos has no doubt what will happen if Mexico, encouraged by the U.S., returns him to Honduras: "They will kill me for sure."

Nicholas D. Kristof, a columnist for *The Times* since 2001, is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner who writes op-ed columns that appear twice a week.

YOUR VIEWS

Another about-face

In a typical move, the Pendleton City Council went back on its word at (the June 7) council meeting. During WWII, the U.S. Army built Sergeant City and for the last 60-odd years, the city has done little to rid the community of the well-known public eyesore. Now, even though the council agreed to limit the Pendleton Heights development to 72 units, they have backtracked on this agreement and now have approved an increase to 140 units, adding five 20-unit apartment buildings and essentially creating a new Sergeant City, another public eyesore.

Check it out yourself. There is only one entrance/exit to the complex, but the city engineer states that the increased traffic should not be a factor on the already congested Southgate. This makes me wonder what kind of engineering degree the city engineer actually has. It certainly can't be in traffic. Bob Patterson tried to quell some of the concerns stating that there is a plan for the north side of exit 209, however, a conversation with ODOT concluded that there was really no good plan as of yet for the south side of the freeway.

I have to hand it to Neil Brown as the only one on the council that questioned the wisdom of continuing this project without a concrete plan. With the city bending over

backwards to accommodate the contractor's wishes, the brand new street has become a parking lot and the promise of a park seems to have slipped through the cracks. Though there were doubts expressed by other council members, it was pretty obvious that the mayor pulls their strings or they just plain don't care because they don't have to deal with the traffic situation on a daily basis. So far, though there have been many fender benders, we haven't had a fatality. How long will our luck continue? The other council member representing Ward 2 is retiring and most likely leaving the area. No help there.

The real astounding statement came from the mayor himself when he implied that we should welcome the traffic congestion as a sign of progress, and another statement by Chuck Woods that he thinks it shows progress when you have to hunt for a parking place downtown. With 64,000 square feet of empty space and probably half the parking we once had, I simply don't see that as progress.

With a growing credibility gap between the people and city hall that's wider than the Grand Canyon, it's no wonder people don't flock to "Coffee with the City" or other city meetings. I noticed that "Ask the City Manager" has been also removed from the city web site. Hmmm ...

Rick Rohde
Pendleton