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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher
JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor
TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Stevens' family tired of Benghazi witch hunt

It isn't often that a remote Pacific Northwest coast newspaper figures in national affairs in even the smallest way, but Washington, D.C.'s attention briefly flickered toward Pacific County, Washington, in the aftermath of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens' 2012 murder by thugs in Benghazi, Libya.

Not only did the U.S. State Department reach out to provide a statement of condolence to the Chinook Indian Nation via the *Chinook Observer*, but CBS News came around to see whether there was any vaguely interesting local information to report about the ambassador, a member of the tribe.

The State Department's outreach was an unanticipated but thoughtful gesture, while national media interest was the sort of due-diligence one would hope for from Edward R. Murrow's organization. Unexpected and unwelcome were efforts by some in Congress to use Chris Stevens' tragic death as a weapon to undermine the political career of then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The Stevens family has shown remarkable patience and restraint as one investigation after another tried to pin blame on Clinton and/or the Obama administration in general. Most recently, late last month Republicans who lead the House Select Committee on Benghazi issued an 800-page, \$7 million report. It lambasted the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA for failing to adequately protect the slain diplomats and respond once

the attack on them was underway. Democrats on the committee labeled the entire enterprise a witch hunt.

Anne Stevens, sister of Ambassador Stevens and chief of pediatric rheumatology at Seattle Children's Hospital, cuts through all the political gibberish in an interview in the June 28 issue of *The New Yorker*.

Some high points:
• The Benghazi compound wasn't well enough protected, but Congress itself underfunded State Department security.
• The latest investigation turned up nothing new. It and earlier efforts were blatantly political.

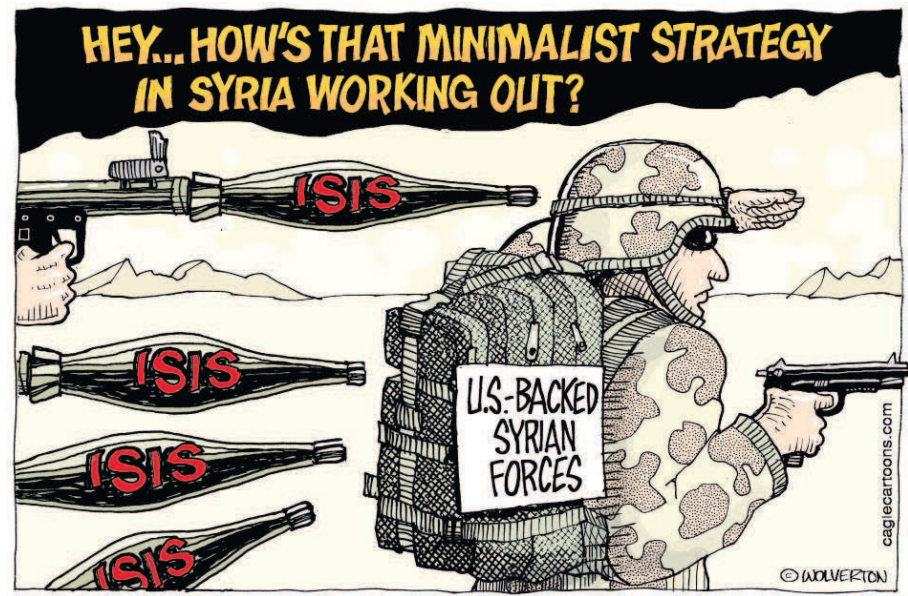
Clinton took full responsibility and established a better security program. However, danger is an inherent part of being a diplomat in a tumultuous region. Chris Stevens and his family knew the risks and were willing to accept them.

"It would be much more useful for Congress to focus on providing resources for security for all State Department facilities around the world — for increasing personnel, language capabilities, for increasing staff to build relationships, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East."

Perhaps best of all in his sister's remarks, it is refreshing to be reminded of how bright and outward-looking Chris Stevens was. His openness to the world, his courage, intelligence and sense of adventure all were exemplary. His Chinook ancestors would be exceptionally proud.

It would be much more useful for Congress to focus on providing resources for security for all State Department facilities around the world.

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.



Be heard!

Comment online at eastoregonian.com



OTHER VIEWS

Choosing leaders: clueless or crazy

These days, if you want to elect a leader, you generally have two choices: a sensible, establishment figure who is completely out of touch, or a populist outsider who is incompetent, crazy or both.

That was the choice British Labour Party members faced in 2015, when they were picking a new leader. They went with the incompetent, inexperienced outsider, Jeremy Corbyn. He recently lost a no-confidence vote among members of Parliament in his own party, 172-40.

That was the choice Republican voters in the states faced throughout the primaries. Passing up the out-of-touch insiders, they went for an overflowing soufflé of crazy incompetence in the form of Donald Trump.

And this is certainly the choice that confronts members of the British Conservative Party. Calm cluelessness comes to them in the form of David Cameron. He was a good prime minister, but he called for a "Brexit" referendum for short-term political gain, blithely unaware of what was happening in his own nation.

Crazy incompetence comes in the forms of the two leading pro-Brexit campaigners, Boris Johnson and Michael Gove.

Johnson is a witty, rakish showman who always puts himself at the center of attention and is willing to put up with a lot of scandal and disapproval in order to stay there.

It's not clear Johnson was really in favor of Britain leaving the European Union, but leading a campaign for it seemed to be the quickest way to make himself prime minister. When his side of the referendum surprisingly won, he emerged ashen-faced, like a boy who'd had fun playing with matches but accidentally blew up his own house.

His first response apparently was denial. He had no post-referendum plan and canceled a meeting with MPs 15 minutes before it was due to start, but, according to British newspapers, did manage to spend a day playing cricket with his friend Earl Spencer at Althorp House, Princess Diana's ancestral estate. The next day he hosted a barbecue at his house in Oxfordshire that was described in *The Telegraph* as "boozy, shambolic, disorganized and ill-disciplined" — which sounds fun but maybe not for a politician in the middle of a world crisis.

Then came the backpedaling. He wrote an op-ed piece for *The Telegraph* headlined "I Cannot Stress Too Much That Britain Is Part of Europe — and Always Will Be," which went beyond reassuring the markets and left the impression that nothing very important had happened at all.

The week ended with him abandoning his



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

campaign to become prime minister — an astounding feat of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory that must make some of history's all-time choke artists gape and applaud.

Gove, on the other hand, is earnestly sincere, with a manner that would get him kicked off many math teams for being too nerdy. Two years earlier, Gove had expressed disdain for Johnson, reportedly telling a crowd after a long dinner: "Boris is incapable of focusing on serious issues and has no gravitas. He isn't a team player and plays to the gallery the whole time." But during the Brexit campaign, Gove was Johnson's deputy and seemed destined to be his No. 2 in the government.

But sometime in the days after the victory he decided that Johnson was wobbly and that he himself should really be No. 1. Gove's doubts were fortified by an email from his wife, the *Daily Mail* columnist Sarah Vine. She reminded her husband that party members were skeptical of Johnson but found him reassuring. "Do not concede any ground. Be your stubborn best," she wrote to him.

How an email from a wife to a husband got leaked to the press is a question for another day.

Gove shockingly announced that rather than support Johnson, he would run against him. This may have been an act of principle, but it left the impression, as one Tory party leader told *The Telegraph*, that Gove is a "Machiavellian psychopath" who had planned to stab his friend in the back "from the beginning."

In any case, they are both now thoroughly in disgrace, Johnson out of the race and Gove languishing.

The big historical context is this: Something fundamental is shifting in our politics. The insiders can't see it. Outsiders get thrown up amid the tumult, but they are too marginal, eccentric and inexperienced to lead effectively.

Without much enthusiasm, many voters seem to be flocking to tough, no-nonsense women who at least seem sensible: Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton and, now, the Conservative Party front-runner, Theresa May.

We probably need a political Pope Francis-type figure, who comes up from the bottom and understands life there, but who can still make the case for an open dynamic world, with free-flowing goods, ideas, capital and people. Until that figure emerges, we could be in for a set of serial leadership crises.

David Brooks's column on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times started in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at The Weekly Standard and a contributing editor at Newsweek and the Atlantic Monthly.

YOUR VIEWS

IP28 does not help public, businesses

It is likely Initiative Petition 28 will be on the November ballot in Oregon. Initiative Petition 28 is a tax on you and me as Oregon residents. The measure would raise the corporate minimum tax by charging certain corporations a 2.5 percent tax on their sales in Oregon above \$25 million annually.

If the measure passes, corporations making \$25 million or more, such as Walmart, Century 21 or Pacific Power, have said they will increase their costs to their consumers, you and me, to make up the difference. They are not going to take the loss.

If voters approve the measure it will bring an estimated \$3 billion a year to the state. The state has made no indication as to how they would use this money. It will be up for grabs. Voters should realize these corporations do make millions and they will pass on the cost to us.

Carefully read this Initiative Petition 28 for it does not favor the public nor corporations. See the story in the *East Oregonian*, June 17, 2016, pages 1A and 10A.

Dorys Grover
Pendleton

EOU making progress under new leadership

Thank you for publishing an honest assessment of Eastern Oregon University on June 29, 2016. Eastern has made leaps and bounds progress in the past year thanks to the steady hand of President Tom Insko. His two mottos are (1) together it is possible and (2) what is measured is managed. Eastern will continue to expand its scope and influence based upon the needs of students and families.

A degree from Eastern opens the door to quality education at a reasonable price. Huge potential exists in the fields of education, agriculture, health care, business, arts and technology.

Our faculty is focused on the teaching aspect by connecting with each of their students. They are dedicated to enrollment, retention and graduation. One-on-one instruction is the hallmark of Eastern. Possibilities are unlimited for students

For example, Erica Hitzman of Pendleton is a recent graduate. Her art work is being juried in a best of show competition with six other finalists from other Oregon universities. Her progress and talent was stoked by the willingness of the faculty to expand her creative skills. Also

she was able to have an international study experience in Germany while obtaining her degree.

Excellence at Eastern Oregon University is within your reach.

David Nelson, chair
Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees
Pendleton

The Pendleton money tree

Seems the Pendleton Development Commission has found a money tree, money for the picking. They have found a solution for curing the blight problem, which in turn boosts available tax receipts in the Urban Renewal District and the funding to get the job done that the PDC was intended to do. Oops, guess they found that money tree to fund a boat ramp.

With the placement of the boat ramp at the west end of town, I can only speculate

that its use would be for providing an alternate means of transportation to Hermiston for shopping. "The goals of the PDC include securing grants to leverage investments and urban renewal dollars in the urban renewal district and to promote the central River Quarter plan as well as the master plan for the river walkway."

We only have two parks that provide somewhat adequate parking for activities. I have heard complaints from residents living around parks that at they are unable to provide a parking spot near their house for guests because of some activity taking place in the park. Perhaps the PDC can lead the Parks Department manager to that same money tree for some easy picking and put in some additional parking.

A boat ramp? Really?

Rick Rohde
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.