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OUR VIEW



Udai Faisal, an infant suffering from acute malnutrition, is hospitalized at Al-Sabeen Hospital in Sanaa, Yemen, last year.

The face of starvation

This is the face of hunger. It's hard to look at, yet if you have a heart you should not be able to look away.

The little boy in the photo, Udai Faisal, died last year, and 1.4 million other children like him in far-away places such as Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria face the same awful fate. Some 20.4 million people are caught up in famine across the region.

They need our help.

We know the reasons — war, drought, political corruption — but none of the victims were at fault.

In February, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres held out his hand and asked for help. "We are already facing a tragedy; we must avoid it becoming a catastrophe," he said at a press conference. He said the U.N. needs \$4.4 billion by the end of March to avoid that catastrophe. He has received \$90 million.

In Ethiopia alone, 10.2 million people are in need and about 2.1 million are acutely malnourished, Challiss McDonough, a spokeswoman for the World Food Program, told *The Los Angeles Times*. She estimates her nonprofit has only 5 percent of the resources it needs in that nation alone.

The U.N. and charities such as the World Food Program are fighting a losing battle. They need food, and they need it now, to rescue men, women and children whose only mistake was to live in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The United States of America is uniquely able to step forward and help.

The U.S. already buys some food for overseas aid programs, but it needs to do more. According to USAID, the federal agency that provides food aid, 795 million people worldwide suffer from chronic hunger. Although USAID already sends \$2.5 billion in food aid to those in need, we as a nation can and should do more.

It's our obligation to humanity.

We live in a land of plenty. Silos across the U.S. are bulging with excess wheat. According to the USDA, 2.07 billion bushels of wheat were in storage as of December. Last

year, U.S. farmers grew 2.3 billion bushels.

The huge stockpile drags on wheat prices, which continue to hover at or below farmers' cost of production, threatening their livelihoods and well-being. Economists estimate that if nothing changes, wheat prices will remain low for up to five years.

In a silo, that wheat is helping no one.

If the U.S. Congress and the Trump administration were to step forward, buy that wheat and send it to sub-Saharan Africa and other corners of the

world gripped by hunger, it will save millions of lives.

Congress and the White House need to recognize our nation's obligation to help the millions of people who are facing starvation. There is nothing we'd rather see than U.S. Marines delivering shiploads of wheat directly to the hungry people of sub-Saharan Africa and Yemen. On each bag should be printed a U.S. flag and the words: "From the People of the United States of America."

An additional outcome of feeding people is they will ultimately be able to fend for themselves and grow their own food, stemming the massive number of refugees flooding neighboring countries and the rest of the world.

We have been at war 15 years. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we have sent our young men or women into harm's way and spent more than \$4 trillion. We can certainly afford to spend a tiny fraction of that to save millions of lives.

Nobody, regardless of race or religion, deserves to die of malnutrition, especially when we have the food and the resources readily available to help them get through this crisis.

Our hope is that Congress and President Trump will work together to provide more food aid for those in need.

It's the right thing to do, but it needs to be done now. Every minute, and every life, counts.

Nobody, regardless of race or religion, deserves to die of malnutrition.



OTHER VIEWS

Mad Trump, happy W.

And a huge sigh of relief went up in the land. The mad king could stay on script long enough to fake normality.

The truculent sovereign could be yanked away, for a blessed hour, from Twitter to a teleprompter.

He could emerge from his dystopian, carnivorous man cave, guarded by the fanged two-headed Stephenbeast of Bannon and Miller, and condemn the hate he spent so long stirring up.

Liberal pundits were nonplused by the shock of the president using his "indoor voice," as he traded the cudgel of "American carnage" for "the torch of truth, liberty and justice" in his maiden speech to Congress. For a moment, at least, the shrieking chorus dimmed, the demands that Donald Trump be put in a straitjacket and that the 25th Amendment be invoked quieted down.

Trump was at long last conforming, and following the norms of Washington. And that always pleases Washington.

He didn't let the usual barrage of petty insults fly or indulge in his loony lovey-dovey talk about the lethal Vladimir Putin.

Mike Pence and Paul Ryan beamed behind the president, like the proud parents of a hockey goon who gets through the game without a trip to the penalty box.

Liberal CNN commentator Van Jones was effusive in praising Trump for his paean to Ryan Owens, the Navy SEAL who died in the first counterterrorism mission hastily authorized by the new president.

"He became president of the United States in that moment, period," Jones said, calling it "one of the most extraordinary moments you have ever seen in American politics, period."

The emperor of chaos was able to muster 60 minutes 14 seconds of non-embarrassing behavior before we were all ensnared once more in the bizarre and vena Russian subplot of the Trump presidency and another Twitter onslaught against Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi for having met with Russians.

What is the moral of this? That if you talk more like a Washington insider than a barbarian at the gate, you're more likely to persuade people to raise the gate and let you do whatever you want, no matter how alarming or perfidious.

Trump critics resist in real time, wide-awake to dangers. By contrast, the public and press belatedly woke up to Dick Cheney's demented fake news plot on Iraq because Cheney was a known known, a Washington player with a capital boys' club resumé and soothing headmaster's voice.

Ordinarily, Trump enjoys plots, gossip and subterranean deals. But now he is frustrated by his rocky debut and increasingly paranoid about what he sees as the Vast Deep-State Conspiracy.

When he froths about crowd size like a bus-and-truck "Caine Mutiny," when he compares the intelligence community to Nazi Germany and labels the press "the enemy of the American people," when he insists that black is white and night is day and makes up whoppers about voter fraud, the body politic's defenses go up on alert against the Trump virus.



MAUREEN DOWD
Comment

But when he behaves more normally, the guard comes down. It's an optical delusion. People get terrified by Crazy Trump. But really, that makes it easier to fight back, because we see the crazy right out there on Twitter.

People were relieved at Calm Trump. But really, that's more potentially dangerous because if he learns how to behave in a more measured, charming way on the surface, he can put a disarming face on

harsh policies or duplicitous practices.

If he seems less like a mad man aiming to rip everything apart, he can more easily rip everything apart.

When I asked Silicon Valley mogul and Trump adviser Peter Thiel recently if he was worried about Trump appointing heads of agencies who wanted to blow up those agencies, the contrarian replied that I had it backward.

"If you actually want to change things in D.C., who should you appoint?" he said. "Maybe if you appoint someone who says, 'I want to shut down this whole agency,' then that person will just have to deal with a staff revolt. And everybody will ignore their orders for three or four years."

"So I think, in theory, to probably change things the most, it's better if you appoint someone who sounds like they're not that controversial but then will just really work at changing things."

As W. ambled back on to the public stage a few days ago, promoting his new book of paintings and stories, "Portraits of Courage: A Commander in Chief's Tribute to America's Warriors," we had a vivid illustration of how far likability can get you.

When Jimmy Fallon ruffled Trump's hair during the campaign, it was treated as a hideous breach, normalizing the invading vulgarian.

But when Jimmy Kimmel joked with W. on Thursday night, the audience reacted warmly. Compared to Trump, it was like W. was the soul of decency and self-deprecation, on his way to Mount Rushmore.

So does it really matter that his policies helped contribute to the greatest economic collapse since the Great Depression and the worst foreign policy blunder in U.S. history?

Asked by Willie Geist on "Sunday Today" about his decision to send soldiers into Iraq and Afghanistan, W. replied lamely: "I don't regret sending soldiers into battle. I regret they got hurt."

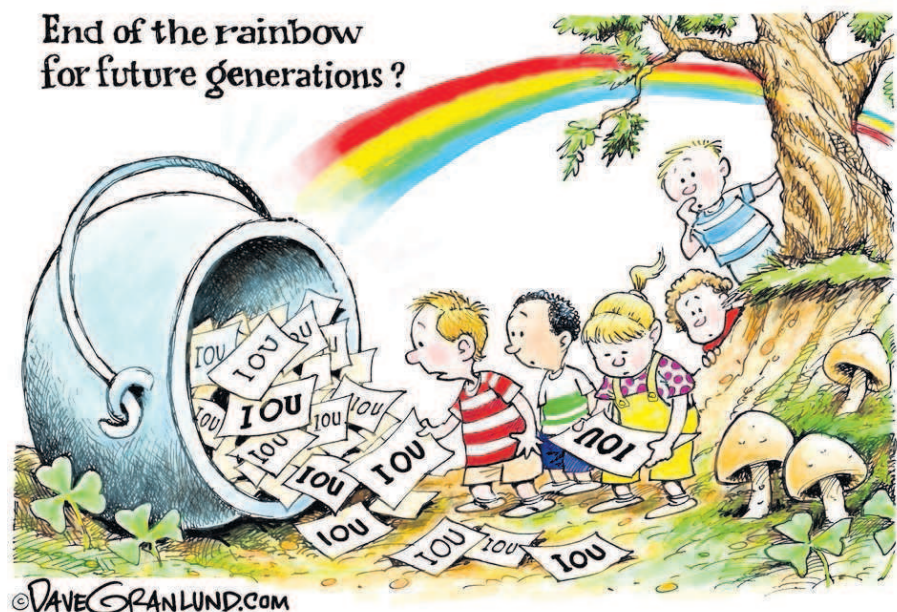
Chatting about the Oscar flub, Kimmel noted that W. had also been "involved in many notable faux pas," as W. laughed.

"Mission accomplished," W. replied, smirking.

It's still too soon to laugh about "Mission Accomplished," especially when peddling anguished portraits of wounded veterans. In fact, it will always be too soon to laugh about "Mission Accomplished."

Maureen Dowd won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary and served as a correspondent in the paper's Washington bureau since 1986.

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

Hermiston School District is bursting at the seams

Hermiston is the largest town in Eastern Oregon and the second fastest growing school district in Oregon.

Did you know that because we are growing at such a fast rate the Hermiston School District has had to utilize 34 modular classrooms across the district since our last school bond that passed in 2008? Most of those modular temporary classrooms serve 320 students and most of them are located on our elementary school campuses. The district is on track to grow another 24 percent, which equates to 1,100 additional students within the next seven years. If this bond does not pass there will be even more modular classrooms throughout the district.

New and safe schools are good for Hermiston's economy. When businesses, corporations or employee recruits are seeking information about Hermiston, schools and what they offer are typically at the top of the list for inquiries, which leads to visits and tours of the facilities. We have a lot to be

proud of and, in order to continue to grow and provide for the needs of our students, we must think about building and expanding to adequately provide the classroom space needed.

What is included in the bond? Replace the aging Rocky Heights Elementary School on the same site, build a new elementary school on district-owned property located on Theater Lane, expand Hermiston High School, replace Highland Hills Elementary School on the same site, and address deferred maintenance issues at Sandstone Middle School.

We have been blessed with great leadership, administration and faculty taking us to new heights, and now is the time to back them up with the facility improvements, safe new schools, additions and space we need, all for the benefit for our children and our future leaders.

I am asking you to vote with me and approve the Hermiston School District bond that will be on your ballot May 16, 2017.

Debbie Pedro
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

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