

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# The cost of war, both at home and abroad

On Monday we honored those who made the ultimate sacrifice — giving their life because their country sent them to war.

Americans answer the call. Generation after generation, the urge to serve our nation draws excellent people into military service. They defend us from foreign threats, protect vital interests around the world, and gain unique experiences and job skills that strengthen the U.S. once they return to civilian life.

Living here as we do in small communities and rural areas, we take special pride in personally knowing servicemen and women. Spring high school graduation ceremonies often include news about local kids making the leap into becoming adult women and men by joining the armed forces. We then follow their accomplishments and adventures on their parents' Facebook pages and in printed news items. It is among the signature experiences of small-town life to encounter young people we witnessed growing up — perhaps playing on the basketball court — now returned on leave from a military assignment someplace far away.

These relationships between civilians and active-service personnel are some of the strongest glue holding the nation together. It is fundamental to the essential national DNA of the U.S. that we respect and appreciate our fellow citizens who man the guard posts of democracy.

There was a time when Congress and the White House contained many veterans. They had personally witnessed the horrible cost of war, in the form of friends shot down before their eyes. Because there is no draft, there are now few veterans among our nation's top leadership — nor do many of their children serve in the armed forces. War has become something they send other Americans' children to do. And in all fairness, fewer U.S. citizens in general have close kinfolk in the line of fire. Most of us, though, in every station of life share a deep and sincere appreciation for our honored war dead.

Since the awful events of Sept. 11, 2001, it is generally reported that more than 5,000 U.S. service personnel have died. More than 50,000 have been physically wounded. Many more suffer from combat-related stress disorders. So even though the generations

that fought in World War II, Korea and Vietnam are passing away, we will be paying tribute to modern American warriors for the next half century or more.

President Ulysses S. Grant — as good a general as the U.S. ever had — said, "There never was a time when, in my opinion, some way could not be found to prevent the drawing of the sword." Our sad drumbeat of wars in the 20th and 21st centuries informs us that we are still too far away from learning this lesson.

But war is not the true subject for Memorial Day.

We honor the personal sacrifices that men and women have made in the name of our nation and its Constitution in many forms.

We were reminded of the ongoing struggle Friday night, as complete strangers came to the aid of two Muslim women on the Portland MAX being harassed by an angry and misguided man, a self-described sociopath and white supremacist. Two of the men who stepped forward — a 53-year-old Army veteran and a 23-year-old recent college graduate — were stabbed to death standing between the knife-wielding attacker and the women.

They paid dearly, as did their families, for standing without hesitation for the American promise.

What we honor on Memorial Day is selfless service to the country. But if this day is to be anything but an excuse for a day off from work, we must put meat on the bones of otherwise empty promises.

History teaches the danger faced by powerful nations where the majority of the citizenry no longer remembers the hardship and realities faced by its defenders. It becomes far too easy to expend their lives for meager pay to achieve too little, then bring them home and forget them.

Repairing the disconnect between decision-makers and these sacrifices is essential to the long-term survival of America's great experiment in democracy. Honoring life is the best payment we can make to the dead.

Meanwhile, genuine respect for America's war dead is best translated into remembering living veterans and tending to their needs. Memorial Day is only the start, not the finish, of recognizing the debt we owe to veterans. Truly honoring them means embodying their values and honor in our own lives every day of the year.

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## OTHER VIEWS

# How not to fight Trump

It is understandable that many people in U.S. government are unhappy that Donald Trump is the president of the United States. It is also understandable that many people would contemplate constitutional mechanisms that might remove him from that office.

But so long as Trump remains the president — and even those of us who imagine 25th Amendment remedies would be wise to bet on at least three years and seven months more — then ad hoc, partisan and extra-constitutional attempts to strip him of normal presidential powers are a very bad idea.

This is basically what we have in the 4th Circuit Court's ruling striking down the administration's controversial travel ban, which seeks to temporarily restrict travel to the United States from six majority-Muslim countries — Sudan, Iran, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Somalia — that are either ruled by terror-sponsoring governments or in the throes of civil war.

There are reasons to think this ban overbroad, counterproductive, damaging to U.S. interests. But it is not a "Muslim ban" under any reasonable legal definition of the term, and on its face it looks entirely constitutional. As the 4th Circuit concedes, the president has broad powers to restrict the entry of noncitizens, and an executive order restricting travel from a specified set of terror-affected countries would normally easily pass muster.

But what is different in this case, the 4th Circuit judges argue, is that Trump's campaign-trail rhetoric about Islam, his wild promise to keep all Muslims out "until we know what's going on," proves that this executive order is really motivated by a religious animus that conflicts with the First Amendment's religious-freedom guarantee.

Of course, constitutional guarantees do not normally apply to foreign nationals. But allowing an immigration restriction motivated by religious animus, the opinion argues, would create a strong likelihood that some "constitutional harm will redound to citizens" as well. And this is enough, it concludes, to make an order that only directly affects foreigners a violation of every American Muslim's First Amendment rights.

The second half of the argument is a remarkable constitutional bankshot. But it's the first half that's most troubling, because it effectively creates what David French of National Review — no Trump admirer — describes as a kind of "Trumplaw," a set of restrictions on presidential action that only apply to Donald Trump. This president cannot do things that would be perfectly legal if any other president did them, under this standard, because the courts will rule against his past demagoguery rather than the policies themselves.



**ROSS DOUTHAT**  
Comment

To some members of the Resistance this may sound like a brilliant approach. It is not. First, as the dissenting opinion rightly notes, it establishes a precedent that would further politicize an already-partisan judiciary, by licensing judges to constantly look beyond the law for excuses to rule against politicians (liberal or conservative) they dislike.

Second, it effectively tells populist politicians who flout norms on the campaign trail that they needn't bother moderating once in office, because the system has already decided that they can't. So it doesn't matter that Trump has shifted his tone on Islam; it doesn't matter that he spent the days before the ruling palling around with Saudis like a Bush Republican. Once a deplorable, always a deplorable — a judgment that's likely to only confirm future populists in their antinomian and extralegal impulses.

And not only future populists but this White House, which remains responsible for counterterrorism in an age when the most important terror threats are Islamist, and any move to safeguard Americans is likely to have a disproportionate effect on Muslims.

One of the things that Trump critics fear most is his possible response to a Manchester-type terrorist attack (or something even worse). But rather than providing a check on future anti-terror overreach, the 4th Circuit's overreaching opinion is likely to encourage it.

After all, if you tell the White House that it cannot do things that normal presidents are allowed to do because of Trump's campaign-trail rhetoric, what incentive does the White House have to work carefully within constitutional lines should ISIS or al-Qaida strike?

Instead, if the courts are automatically going to rule against Trump on any counterterrorism issue that touches on Islam, the president may feel that he may as well prepare for war with the judiciary, since tailoring his policies to fit existing precedents is clearly just a waste.

There was a lot of loose talk about a "constitutional crisis" in the wake of the firing of James Comey. But it's easier to imagine the term applying, as it did in the days of Trump's idol Andrew Jackson, to a direct clash between the White House and the courts.

Trump's flaws of temperament and character make such a clash dangerously likely. But so does a judicial activism that cuts down normal legal precedent in order to go after him, and tries to pre-emptively strip away his powers without any warrant save self-righteousness.

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

## 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.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Leave Twitter to meadowlarks

Let's face it, if you wake up every morning and hear Trump trumpeting like a bull elephant, it shouldn't surprise you. About seven o'clock the twitter begins. We have an angry president.

But we may now have help. The Justice Department has appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller as a special counsel to lead a federal investigation into allegations that Donald Trump's campaign collaborated with Russia to sway the 2016 election that put him in the White House. The appointment is another shock-a-day event in Washington's escalating saga. More chaos began with the firing of FBI Director James Comey, who was getting too close to the truth about Trump's involvement with Russia, which Trump maintains is a hoax and partisan witch hunt.

As special counsel, Mueller has the authority to oversee a federal investigation into Trump's activities that will confirm whether or not there was collusion between Trump's campaign and any foreign entity, especially Russia, and this includes any

facts or information that may come from the investigation. Mueller, a former federal prosecutor at the Justice Department, was appointed by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who was connected with the firing of Comey.

There are so many "big names" in all of this meddling of Russia's influence, the average American citizen gets lost in the political shuffling. One point to keep in mind is: What's going on between Trump and Putin? If Trump is found vulnerable (guilty) it is an obstruction of justice. To betray one's nation and the American people is treason.

One thing is certain: Trump gets mightily upset whenever the subject of his campaign's possible connection with Russia's interference in the election surfaces. We certainly don't envy Mr. Mueller's role in this important investigation which could damage our nation's credibility in world affairs.

I am a patriotic citizen and I support Mueller. All of this meddling has interfered with Congress and its duties. I like Senator Lindsay Graham's speculation that Trump is probably glad to get out of town — and a lot of them are, too. Furthermore, my stocks are going down, and I, too, am a bit angry,

but I don't get up every morning twittering. I'm leaving that to Oregon's state bird, the meadowlark.

**Dr. Dorys C. Grover**  
Pendleton

### Federal financial support makes local project possible

The recently approved omnibus bill supported by Oregon's members of Congress — Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Jeff Merkley, and Congressman Greg Walden — maintains key community and economic funding through September 2017. Knowing that Congress is working to sustain these programs for Fiscal Year 2017 is a good sign for these programs' continued funding in 2018, despite the President's proposal to eliminate financing for these important programs.

Why is this important? Eastern Oregon's public infrastructure such as water, sewer and wastewater systems are aging and are in need of repair or replacement. The Water Infrastructure and Innovation Act — strongly supported by Senator Merkley — provides a source of funding to meet the infrastructure needs in Eastern Oregon. Other programs in the omnibus bill that support Eastern

Oregon's community and economic development in a variety of ways include:

- Economic Development Administration contribution through investment in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The CEDS process, led by EDA-designated Economic Development Districts such as the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation, brings together local stakeholders to assess and plan for regional growth. This funding has created or retained 130 jobs annually within GEODC's seven-county district;
- The Community Development Block Grant to support infrastructure and housing;
- FAA Contract Tower Program, which is vital to sustaining the city of Pendleton's airport; and
- USDA Rural Development funding that supports rural infrastructure, entrepreneurship and job creation.

These programs, and many others, return tax dollars to communities that need them. GEODC will work hard to make sure they remain available here in GEODC's seven-county Eastern Oregon District.

**Susan Christensen, executive director**  
Greater Eastern Oregon Development

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