

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
Regional Advertising Director

MARCY ROSENBERG
Circulation Manager

JANNA HEIMGARTNER
Business Office Manager

MIKE JENSEN
Production Manager

OUR VIEW

In the year 2243

Imagine the year is 2243. Now imagine the weapons. Nuclear warheads will still be around, though we can hope they will be dusty from disuse. But more than likely there will be even more damaging and terrifying weaponry in circulation. Consider entire autonomous armies, high-energy lasers, space-based weaponry orbiting overhead, hypersonic aircraft and electronic bombs. Perhaps you could program a drone from your Umatilla County basement and fly it straight into the White House. Perhaps you will be able to kill millions with the click of a mouse. Perhaps you will not even need a mouse.

It seems hard to imagine the technological capabilities and how they could be used, both for good and ill. It is equally hard to imagine how future governments and non-government actors will keep Americans and the world safe from the crazed actor — be he or she a head of state, the leader of a political or religious movement or a lone wolf interested only in death and destruction. What laws and rules will have to be enacted to govern autonomous armies? Will we outlaw space weaponry, or will we all have one missile pointed at one another, allowing us to operate under a comfortable détente of mutually assured destruction?

It's impossible to answer with so much unknown about the year 2243. Who knows what will be necessary, what technologies will exist, what defenses could be employed, and how violent or peaceful the world will be? Who knows if nations and states will still exist? Who knows if the planet will?

Consider then that 2243 is 226 years from now. That is the same distance in the future as 1791 is in the past. 1791 was the year the Bill of Rights — including the Second Amendment — was ratified and became the law of this land.

It is understandable then, that the language and foresight of our founding fathers may seem ill equipped to handle the technology and culture of today. The Amendment reads, as if we needed any reminder more than two centuries later: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The writers of those words were understandably unable to conceive of the America we know today. The Second Amendment was written mostly to discourage a standing army, which Jefferson specifically thought was a threat to the peace of the nation. We've long since required one — and long since made it the largest in the world — as new technologies made our country more vulnerable to destructive attack. Capable defenses were necessary, and we sacrificed liberty and tax dollars to make it so.

Those founders also did not foresee the technological advances of "arms," and the way mass violence has seeped into our country. They could not imagine a world as interconnected, as integrated and as immediately impacted. They couldn't imagine tanks and missiles and automatic weapons. They couldn't even imagine a place we now call Oregon.

It's worth considering how long ago the amendment was written, and what the goal of those writers were, in light of Sunday's mass shooting in Las Vegas, the deadliest in modern American history. It took place little over a year after the Orlando nightclub shooting, which at the time was the deadliest in modern American history. And that took place just nine years after the mass shooting in Virginia Tech, which set its own mark as the country's deadliest in modern times. Interspersed are the 26 killed (mostly children) in Newtown in 2012 and the 14 killed in San Bernadino in 2014.

We're setting records for all the wrong reasons, while our law remains rooted in 1791.

It is optimistic — but also naive — to imagine 2243 as a utopian paradise where technology has brought only peace and prosperity. But with each technological advance, there has always been someone — government or otherwise — who has found devious uses.

Consider that the rules and laws and societal norms we fight for in 2017 can not only help make our world a less deadly place now, but could set the foundation for law hundreds of years from now. It may be necessary as the weapons of 2243 will carry with them unimaginable consequences — total annihilation at the click of a mouse instead of 58 Americans dead at a concert.

Imagine the weapons of 226 years from now. That is the same distance from today as 1791 — the year the Second Amendment was ratified.

OTHER VIEWS

Our NATIONAL ANTHEM



If only Stephen Paddock had been a Muslim

If only Stephen Paddock had been a Muslim ... If only he had shouted "Allahu akbar" before he opened fire on all those concertgoers in Las Vegas ... If only he had been a member of ISIS ... If only we had a picture of him posing with a Quran in one hand and his semiautomatic rifle in another ...

If all of that had happened, no one would be telling us not to dishonor the victims and "politicize" Paddock's mass murder by talking about preventive remedies.

No, no, no. Then we know what we'd be doing. We'd be scheduling immediate hearings in Congress

about the worst domestic terrorism event since 9/11. Then Donald Trump would be tweeting every hour "I told you so," as he does minutes after every terror attack in Europe, precisely to immediately politicize them. Then there would be immediate calls for a commission of inquiry to see what new laws we need to put in place to make sure this doesn't happen again. Then we'd be "weighing all options" against the country of origin.

But what happens when the country of origin is us?

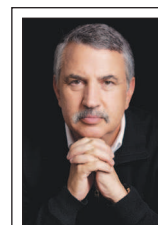
What happens when the killer was only a disturbed American armed to the teeth with military-style weapons that he bought legally or acquired easily because of us and our crazy lax gun laws?

Then we know what happens: The president and the Republican Party go into overdrive to ensure that nothing happens. Then they insist — unlike with every ISIS-related terror attack — that the event must not be "politicized" by asking anyone, particularly themselves, to look in the mirror and rethink their opposition to common-sense gun laws.

So let's review: We will turn the world upside down to track down the last Islamic State fighter in Syria — deploying B-52s, cruise missiles, F-15s, F-22s, F-35s and U2s. We will ask our best young men and women to make the ultimate sacrifice to kill or capture every last terrorist. And how many Americans has the Islamic State killed in the Middle East? I forget. Is it 15 or 20? And our president never stops telling us that when it comes to ISIS, defeat is not an option, mercy is not on the menu and he is so tough he even has a defense secretary nicknamed "Mad Dog."

But when fighting the NRA — the National Rifle Association, which more than any other group has prevented the imposition of common-sense gun-control laws — victory is not an option, moderation is not on the menu and the president and the Republican Party have no mad dogs, only pussy cats.

And they will not ask themselves to make even the smallest sacrifice — one that might risk their seats in Congress — to stand up for legislation that might make it just a little harder for an American to stockpile an arsenal like Paddock did, including 42 guns, some of



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

them assault rifles — 23 in his hotel room and 19 at his home — as well as thousands of rounds of ammunition and some "electronic devices." Just another deer hunter, I guess.

On crushing ISIS, our president and his party are all in. On asking the NRA for even the tiniest moderation, they are AWOL. No matter how many innocents are fatally shot — no matter even that one of their own congressional leaders was critically wounded playing baseball — it's never time to discuss any serious policy measures to mitigate gun violence.

And in the wake of last month's

unprecedented hurricanes in the Atlantic — that wrought over \$200 billion of damage on Houston and Puerto Rico, not to mention smaller cities — Scott Pruitt, Trump's head of the Environmental Protection Agency, also told us that it was not the time to discuss "the cause and effect" of these superstorms and how to mitigate their damage. We need to focus on helping the victims, he said. But for Pruitt, we know, it's never time to take climate change seriously.

To take ISIS seriously abroad, but then to do nothing to mitigate these other real threats to our backyards, concert venues and coastal cities, is utter madness.

It's also corrupt. Because it's driven by money and greed — by gunmakers and gun-sellers and oil and coal companies, and all the legislators and regulators they've bought and paid to keep silent. They know full well most Americans don't want to take away peoples' rights to hunt or defend themselves. All we want to take away is the right of someone to amass a military arsenal at home and a hotel room and use it on innocent Americans when some crazy rage wells up inside him. But the NRA has these cowardly legislators in a choke hold.

What to do?

Forget about persuading these legislators. They are not confused or underinformed. They are either bought or intimidated. Because no honest and decent American lawmaker would look at Las Vegas and Puerto Rico today and say, "I think the smartest and most prudent thing to do for our kids is to just do nothing."

So there is only one remedy: Get power. If you are as fed up as I am, then register someone to vote or run for office yourself or donate money to someone running to replace these cowardly legislators with a majority for common-sense gun laws. This is about raw power, not persuasion. And the first chance we have to change the balance of power is the 2018 midterm elections. Forget about trying to get anything done before then. Don't waste your breath.

Just get power. Start now.

Thomas Friedman, a New York Times columnist, was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes for international reporting in Beirut and Israel and one for commentary.

To take ISIS seriously abroad, but then do nothing to mitigate these threats to our backyards, is utter madness.

OTHER VIEWS

Child care facilities need lead testing

The Bend Bulletin

The state of Oregon will not require day care centers to test for lead in their water. The tests, which can cost nearly \$100, are simply too expensive, officials say.

Lead in drinking water is damaging to humans, particularly very young ones. That's been a problem, particularly in the Portland area where, in spring 2016, unacceptably high lead levels were found in several schools' drinking water. The school district failed to make the information public in a timely manner.

Central Oregon's schools did fairly well when tests were ordered across the state in 2016, after Portland's problems became public.

Bend reported lead in a couple of the district's oldest buildings, while one school in Crook County also had lead in one of its drinking water sources. All problems in both districts have since been taken care of.

But while lawmakers have since required Oregon schools test for lead, the requirement does not extend to child care facilities.

Deciding what to do about that was

left to the state's Early Learning Council, which decided on Sept. 28 not to require testing in child care facilities here. The state of Washington recently decided to make such testing mandatory.

Oregon officials cited the cost of testing faucets and other water sources, and noted that they neither could demand nor help pay for corrective measures. They could, instead, simply bar kids from facilities with lead problems.

Officials were concerned about the potential for losing child care slots in a state with not enough child care to go around.

Still, the decision leaves parents in a quandary. Unless facilities test voluntarily and make the results known, parents may worry about what their kids are ingesting.

Providers can then have the tests done on their own and then, assuming the results are good, advertising that fact. The state is also issuing new guidelines about letting water run for several minutes if a faucet hasn't been used in several hours.

If parents are concerned, they can pressure facilities to have the testing done.

YOUR VIEWS

State budget is out of control, against desire of rural voters

I cannot resist the fodder in a recent *La Grande Observer*: "Deficit climbs to \$25.3 billion" by Ted Sicking of *The Oregonian*. When politicians put a 'B' for billions and a 'T' for trillions behind dollar amounts it dilutes the subject. In this case folks, we are talking billions. Here in Oregon.

The beast is PERS and the public employee unions that own Oregon because they own the Democrats that control Oregon, and the budgets under attack are any and all community-based, service-related entities in Oregon: schools, fire departments, etc. — any entity with a public employee. Here's the insult to injury — Oregon's revenue was up \$200 million this year. And now, every household and small business in Oregon will also be tapped.

I personally know retired public employees that are today making twice the amount they made while working, and four times what they made when they first started. Democrats tend to get riled over public land allotments that generate revenue as well as resource-based

economies that support rural middle income families in Oregon but are mum over this assault of the taxpayer — all the while adding more public employees with each new piece of legislation as we watch billions of dollars of timber resources go up in smoke.

One of the greatest economic fallacies of government, especially under progressive Democratic control, is that government creates wealth. It does not. People generate wealth.

Union County residents as well as 31 other rural counties from here to Nevada, Idaho and Washington did not elect the people who control our destiny here in Oregon. There is no leadership in Salem; these people rule by decree and subjugate its rural residents.

Oregon's current leadership has failed to tame or control the beast. Why? Because the beast owns them, and through their myopic vision of Oregon, they only see what constitutes .04 percent of Oregon's land mass. Oregon's royalty has no desire nor the knights in their court with the fortitude to contain or slay the beast.

Oregon is going bankrupt at the taxpayer's expense.

Grant Darrow
Elgin