

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN
OwnerDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorTIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

It's time for Trump to prove himself on trade

The sight of President Donald Trump making nice with Kim Jong Un, a sworn enemy of the U.S. who has threatened to nuke our nation along with Japan and South Korea, provided a jolting contrast to the president's bizarre performance at the recent G-7 economic summit, where he thumbed his nose at our strongest allies.

Confusion may be part of Trump's game plan, but he can't seem to get beyond that. Part of his negotiating tactic is knocking the other parties back on their heels by emphasizing that he is willing to do anything, including walk away.

Fair enough. Anyone who has ever bought a used car knows that. The thing is, we're not negotiating for an '87 Buick. We're talking about multi-billion-dollar trade deals with our allies that could make or break U.S. farmers, ranchers and others. Japan alone buys an average of \$800 million worth of wheat a year from U.S. farmers. Upwards of 90 percent of the wheat grown in the Northwest goes to Japan and other overseas customers. Because Trump bailed out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Canada and Australia, both major wheat producers, will have a \$65 a ton tariff advantage on wheat they sell to Japan.

That's just one example. Other commodities face similar scenarios, all of which spell trouble for farmers



U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong Un reach to shake hands at the Capella resort June 12, in Singapore. The president likes to talk about making deals but can't seem to get it done.

and ranchers, whose livelihoods are at stake because they depend on trade.

Trump says his showboating has worked for him in the past.

"My whole life has been deals," he said at a press conference last week. "I've done great at it, and that's what I do."

That being the case, we have to wonder why he's thus far failed to negotiate new trade deals with our most important allies. When he took office, one of the first things he did was tear up the TPP, which includes

three of our best trade partners, Japan, Mexico and Canada. Then he went after China and South Korea, two other important trade partners.

Only in South Korea was his administration able to renegotiate the KORUS deal. Funny thing, because it's a lot like the original deal.

Trump said he would procure bilateral agreements with our other major trade partners.

It's been 18 months, and we're still waiting. During that time, U.S. farmers have seen overseas markets

they nurtured for decades put at risk, they've seen retaliatory tariffs put on their crops and products, and they've seen zero progress from Mr. Big Deal.

In fact, they've seen the opposite of progress. His tariffs on steel and aluminum from overseas have only resulted in retaliatory tariffs, many on U.S. agricultural exports.

Trump has had plenty of time to negotiate trade deals with Japan, Mexico and Canada. He's had plenty of time to sit down with the Chinese and the Europeans.

And we're all still waiting.

Trump has done some good things, mainly by reining in federal regulations such as those governing the Waters of the U.S. But trade is the arena that will make or break nearly every U.S. farmer and rancher.

Shaking hands with the North Korean dictator was easy. The little guy seemed thrilled by the photo opportunity. We hope the meeting leads to an actual disarmament agreement of some type, but with Trump's growing track record of failing to follow through on his "deals," we're not holding our breath.

It's been a year and a half since Trump said he would negotiate replacement deals for TPP and upgrade the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Time's up, Mr. President. Quit messing around with the sideshows and get U.S. trade back on track.

OTHER VIEWS

Trickle down Trumpsters and language

On Father's Day last week, the highest-paid employee of Washington State University tweeted out a video of a 2014 speech by Barack Obama that was altered to make him sound like a one-world-government tyrant.

When called on the fraud, Mike Leach, the head football coach and \$3.5 million a year representative of the same school that gave us legendary newsmen Edward R. Murrow, said, "Prove it."

It was easily proven as doctored. But instead of apologizing, and owning up to his dissemination of a fake conspiracy video, he then wrote, "What is a fact?" Of all the things President Donald Trump has done to destroy civil norms, his debasement of language is the most chilling and poisonous. For it has now reached down to every level, allowing people who are supposed to be societal pillars, or even role models, to act as if reality has no foundation.

Trump's frightful legacy is not just the epidemic of everyday incivility in daily life. Nor is it his practice of using dehumanizing language to justify cruelty. The worst of the trickle-down Trump effects is the way he's opened the door for other public figures to get away with making things up. When a president is applauded for lying, why should a head football coach, or a Cabinet secretary, feel any shame for doing the same thing?

To authoritarians, language is a weapon, usually deployed in the service of an emotional half-truth: something you believe to be true even if it isn't. Truth has to become meaningless — "What is a fact?" — in order for this strategy to work and morality to become a shapeless thing.

We saw it when Vice President Mike Pence called former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio a champion of "the rule of law." Arpaio is a convicted criminal later pardoned by Trump.

And we saw it in graphic detail over the last week with the Trump administration policy of ripping migrant children from their parents. The cages holding weeping kids are "essentially summer camps," in the words of Fox News host Laura Ingraham.

Worse, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the administration's zero tolerance policy that led to 2,300 children being taken from their parents doesn't exist — "period." A day after saying this, she defended the policy that

doesn't exist. And on Wednesday, Trump signed an order trying to resolve a crisis that he created, after saying earlier he couldn't stop it because it was the fault of others, even if it did exist.

After a while, people come to "believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and that nothing was true," wrote Hannah Arendt, the German-born philosopher, in describing how

truth lost its way in her native land.

Everyone laughed when the North Korean news agency reported that the late Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il, scored five holes-in-one while playing a round of golf. But how is this any different from Trump saying this week that crime is "way up" in Germany when it just recorded the lowest year for crime in nearly three decades? Who is left to call him on this? The press, which he's labeled the "enemy of the American people"?

In North Korea, the masses are forced to believe the lies, something Trump clearly envies. "He speaks and his people sit up in attention," he said of Kim Jong Un. "I want my people to do the same."

My larger concern today is this: How is a fact-based democracy supposed to function when the Trump toxins have gotten deep into the national bloodstream?

When Mike Leach was caught in his video lie, his university did not set the record straight. Washington State issued a meaningless statement backing its coach's right to his "personal opinions." And Leach himself said the actual words spoken by Obama are "irrelevant anyway" because "we are discussing ideas." All of this from an institution of higher learning.

And where did Leach get this mush, an excuse that would be laughed off the field if one of his players tried it with him?

From the top. Remember when Trump retweeted a video purporting to show a Muslim migrant beating up a Dutch boy on crutches? After authorities in the Netherlands said the assailant was neither migrant nor Muslim, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the truth didn't matter.

"Whether it's a real video, the threat is real," she said. In other words, "What is a fact?"

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for *The New York Times*, first as the *Pacific Northwest* correspondent.

Relax... Enjoy... Luxuriate...
at Oregon's First TRUMP HOTEL.

TRUMP HOTEL SHERIDAN
by the Numbers

- 123 People detained for fleeing violence or religious/political persecution
- 52 People from India, the largest group from a single country
- 23 Hours confined to a cell (much more than non-immigrant inmates)
- 6 Fathers/husbands separated from their spouses/children
- 0 Visits allowed with attorneys

SPINERODDIE
OPINION@EASTOREGONIAN.COM

OTHER VIEWS

Court punts on gerrymandering

The Register-Guard

Gerrymandering — drawing political districts to achieve a particular result — is nearly as old as the republic, but the U.S. Supreme Court has never ruled on the practice except in regard to minorities' voting rights. It ducked the issue again this week, declining to rule in a pair of cases for technical reasons.

But states and voters have an urgent need for the court's guidance before the 2020 Census triggers a national wave of redistricting.

The urgency arises from the fact that gerrymandering has been turbocharged by technology and partisanship. Mapping software and voter databases allow district lines to be adjusted with fine-grained precision. The widening ideological gulf between the major parties has raised the stakes when districts are drawn.

One of the cases rejected by the court arose from Wisconsin, where in 2012 Republicans won 48.6 percent of the votes but gained 60 of 99 seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Yet defining impermissible political gerrymandering won't be easy. Voters gerrymander themselves into like-minded communities, and districts reflecting

such geographic sorting may be fairly drawn. Districts drawn to perfectly reflect the partisan makeup of an entire state's electorate could resemble the salamander-shaped district drawn by Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry in 1812.

It might be possible for the court to judge the fairness of political districts by examining the process rather than the result. Some states, including Washington and California, have established non-partisan redistricting commissions. Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson has appointed a committee to study the state's redistricting process.

Oregon's current districts were drawn by the Legislature in 2011, aided by the fact that the state House was evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans that year. In several preceding decades legislature deadlocks caused the job to fall to the secretary of state. The secretary of state is a partisan official, but his or her work has tended to be politically neutral in this area.

Even so, both the Legislature and the secretary of state would benefit from a clear court ruling on partisan gerrymandering — Oregon can't presume to be permanently immune to the overtly political redistricting that has occurred in other states.