

Come together right now

News is coming fast and furious these days — so fast it can be hard to keep up. But the indictment against 13 Russian nationals unsealed in Washington, D.C., laid bare the fact that a foreign government was meddling successfully in our political process.

And that should make us stop and consider the implications for more than just a moment.

News that Russia wanted to influence our country may not be earth-shaking. And we're not so naive to think the United States hasn't acted similarly for decades, both with covert and overt operations the world over. Loch K. Johnson, the dean of American intelligence scholars, told Scott Shane that "(The United States) has been doing this kind of thing since the CIA was created in 1947."

Yet, in our modern world, manipulation and propaganda has become more subtle than briefcases filled with money, incendiary mailers delivered to doorsteps or salacious information slipped to newspapers.

Social media allows us to become easier targets. Facebook is a near-perfect portal for passing along dubious information, and covering your tracks while doing it. It is an outrage that these billion-dollar corporations are becoming rich while polluting civil discourse and, like Russia, publishing information designed to inflame and distract.

Those attempting to divide our nation are exploiting an American nature that we have been far too eager to engage ourselves. We're too likely to

pass along information that confirms our biases or picks on people we disagree with. We're too quick to demonize the other side in the debate. We're too lax at considering different opinions.

But we should not feel helpless in the battle for our knowledge and our vote.

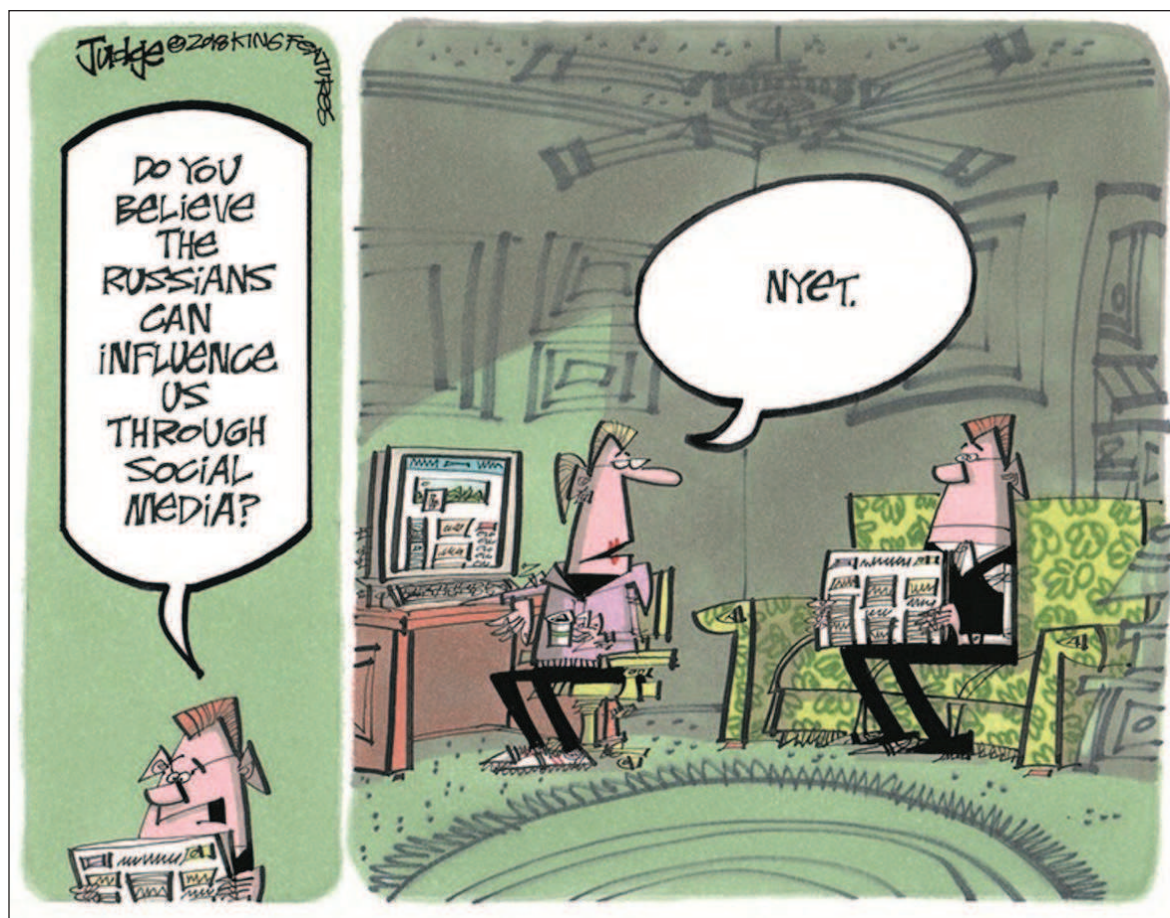
We can read different sources. We can take education seriously and never stop learning. We can conduct ourselves decently online, and think of those we interact with as real humans who want our world to be better — but have a different way of getting there.

Enemies of our democracy, Russia included, love to see Americans yelling at one another. They love it even more when we turn our weapons against one another. But why make the Russians and ISIS and Kim Jong-Un happy with our infighting?

We are not vulnerable. We are a rich, powerful, free nation. Life is good for most. As a whole, the world is richer and healthier and more peaceful than ever before.

We can argue about taxes and government, immigration and gun control. We can argue online and in the street. And we should do all of these things — but we should do it peacefully, and with respect, and with people who we know are real humans and not trolls.

This movement toward nationalism and ethnic identity is a reaction to globalization, loss of identity and fear of change. Still, we can rise above the anxiety of the moment, trust our neighbors and thwart our enemies.



GUEST COMMENT

Just a Common Soldier (A Soldier Died Today)

By A. Lawrence Vaincourt
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.

Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,

While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,

But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land

A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,

Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives

Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.

While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,

Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,

That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we know

It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,

Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?

Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend

His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,

But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part

Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,

Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,

Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sign advertises by appearance

To the Editor:

Litter and trash alongside the John Day Taxi portion of "Adopt-A-Highway" could not have been cleaned up four times as Richie Colbeth claims. There is cardboard, seat cushions and a venetian blind that has been alongside the road since last summer. Perhaps that does not constitute litter or was just overlooked!

What is perplexing is the convoluted response on the part of John Day Taxi that it is someone else's fault, including the wind, that the roadside has an accumulation of litter. Colbeth agrees the roadside should be kept clean, but he can't do it and a litter patrol won't do it for him.

Having a name under an Adopt-A-Highway sign indicates that the person or entity has the responsibility to keep the roadside picked up of litter. The sign does advertise someone performing a conscientious effort to keep the area looking neat by its very appearance, or shoddy noncompliance. I'm not buying the excuses.

Herb Brusman
John Day

Editor's note: The Eagle contacted John Eden from the Oregon Department of Transportation, who said the agency is "currently evaluating the situation to determine an appropriate course of action."

Eden said Adopt-A-Highway volunteers in Grant County have only been required to clean up twice per year under the program, but the number will be increasing in the future. John Day Taxi applied to be in the program in January 2017, Eden said, and completed its first cleanup in April. Subsequent cleanups are coordinated through the local maintenance crew. Eden said the agency appreciates its volunteers who are "a rare and coveted resource for our maintenance crews due to their willingness to do something good for the state, for free." The Eagle will not publish any further letters on this topic until ODOT determines its course of action.

'Participate in the upcoming objection process'

To the Editor:

In the next few months, we anticipate the release of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR). This revision by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is a rewrite of the 1990 Forest Plan that currently sets policy for management of our lands administered by the USFS in Eastern Oregon.

The revision will cover all three national forests and calls for a monumental shift in how Eastern Oregonians enjoy our mountains and access natural resources we have utilized for over 150 years. That shift will take place in adop-

tion of a "closed unless open" forest model.

This new model will adopt motorized access restrictions known as "designated routes" and "closed cross country travel."

When adopted, Eastern Oregonians will no longer be allowed to access natural resources via a motorized means if they are not within a "designated route."

You will not be allowed to retrieve your big game with an ATV "off a road," and if your private property isn't on a "designated route," you will have to request permission from the USFS to access it. These are but a couple of examples.

Any motorized use off a designated route could lead to a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or up to one year in jail.

To be clear, the BMFPR does not itself close the forest, as that will happen through the Travel Management Plan. But the BMFPR will allow the USFS to change current policy cutting off "cross country travel," then justifying travel management plans restricting motorized access to public lands.

Please, participate in the upcoming objection process and let the USFS know these restrictions are unacceptable, and you, as a resident of the area, expect your public lands to remain open to full multiple use, not to the segregated system currently being proposed.

John D. George
Bates

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.

WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net.
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.

• **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

SALEM

- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.
- **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: <http://wyden.senate.gov> Fax: 202-228-2717.

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