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15 YEARS AFTER 9/11 US CAN COMBAT TERRORISM AND HELP ITS VICTIMS

As we mark the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, terrorism remains a major focus of the United States and the world.

Extremist Muslim factions are as deadly as ever, spreading their murderous reach through new, dispersed, means. How best to confront these forces remains a divisive debate. But, as we've seen after other attacks, the United States is not a country built on fear or condemnation of others. We are also not a country that isolates itself from the world's problems.

The U.S. and its democracy are defined by resilience. It was resiliency that carried us through the dark days after Sept. 11. There were missteps — the invasion of Iraq, the Patriot Act — but America today is as optimistic, welcoming and engaged in the world as it was before 9/11. That is what makes America great.

The U.S. has not, and will not, turn its back on the causes and ravages of terrorism, as it also engages with world leaders on other pressing issues such as climate change, economic development and international stability.

The reign of terror of the Islamic State, or ISIS, remains most deadly in the Middle East. U.S.-led airstrikes and a limited number of ground troops have stopped some ISIS advances and driven it from control of several cities in northern Syria, but the radical militants continue to spread misery.

Entire cities in Syria have been flattened amid sectarian violence there, forcing millions of refugees, half of them children, to flee to camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Nearly 7 million Syrians remain displaced within their own country. Thousands have continued northward and westward to Europe.

U.S. politicians, particularly Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, are telling us to fear radical Islamic terrorism, suggesting we view all Muslims, including Somali immigrants to Maine, as potential terrorists and calling for harsh restrictions on their immigration to the United States. Such calls neglect two basic realities. Refugees, of varying religions, are fleeing the Middle East to escape the violence perpetrated by the Islamic State and other radical Muslim groups. Forcing refugees to remain in Syria and Iraq to be further victimized is inhumane and empowers these terrorists.

Second, millions of Muslims live peaceful lives around the world. They serve in the U.S. military. Like Maine doctor Jabbar Fazeli, they alert authorities to report friends and relatives who they believe are being radicalized and persuaded to join in terrorist activities. They are our co-workers, neighbors and friends.

Today, lawmakers face the same questions that vexed them in the wake of 9/11. What is the role of the U.S. in the world? Is it to spread democracy, as was the mantra of the Bush administration? Is it to halt the growing reach of ISIS? To protect innocent civilians from murderous thugs, terrorists and regimes?

Are any of these goals achievable? At what cost, in terms of money and human lives? Are Americans willing to bear these costs? For how long?

ISIS and similarly minded groups must continue to be confronted. This can be done in ways that honor the U.S. traditions of personal freedom and engagement in the world. The U.S. can continue to combat terrorism while also helping and welcoming its victims.

OTHER VOICES

SOLVING CHICAGO'S DEADLY CRISIS

The deadliest month in two decades. More homicides this year than in New York and Los Angeles combined. Almost twice as many people killed as U.S. soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2013. With each new homicide in Chicago comes a new description that tries to capture the magnitude — and horror — of the violence that has plagued America's third-largest city.

A wave of shootings — 65 people shot, 13 of them fatally — over the Labor Day weekend pushed the number of dead for 2016 past 500, putting Chicago on pace for more than 600 homicides for the year. Among those killed over the holiday weekend: a 44-year-old man killed as he and his wife drove to the grocery store, an 80-year-old pastor shot in the face outside the senior home where he lived and a 17-year-old boy shot in the back. Others gunned down this year include a young woman caught in crossfire as she walked her baby in a stroller and a newborn baby boy who died two days after an emergency delivery necessitated by his mother being shot in the chest.

The violence, reminiscent of the crack-cocaine epidemic that drove murders in cities across the nation in the 1990s, seems to have left officials flummoxed. Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said Tuesday that his department is doing all it can to combat violence. "It's not a police issue, it's a society issue," he said, pointing the finger instead at "impoverished neighborhoods" where "people without hope do these kinds of things."

That sounded like an evasion. No doubt the chief is right about the

complexities that give root to crime and violence. But it is clear — as evidenced by the success New York and other cities have had in curtailing homicides — that Chicago has a unique set of problems in which the police play their part. Foremost among them are the tumult and distrust that pervade police-community relations in the wake of the fatal shooting of black teen Laquan McDonald by an officer in October 2014 and the belated release of a troubling video a year later. That the police union urged its members to refuse voluntary overtime over the recent holiday weekend — when they were most needed — suggests there may be a morale problem, the "Ferguson effect" of police not doing all they can.

It is also important to address the flow of illegal guns that fuels the violence in gang-heavy neighborhoods. Despite restrictive gun laws, guns are easily available from nearby jurisdictions, such as Indiana. And despite its reputation for strict control, Chicago has relatively lenient gun penalties. There is a one-year minimum for illegal possession, compared with New York's 3½ years.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel has promised to deliver a major address in mid-September to deal with the violence. "It's a complex set of problems that will be dealt with in a very comprehensive way," he said. "Everything from the police, to children, to what we have to do for their safety, to guns, to making sure we're providing hope where there is despair." That many of his constituents think it more likely that young people will become victims of crime than graduates from college shows the need for urgency in offering solutions.

The Washington Post (Sept. 8)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take down fence

Emmet Meara in his Aug. 22 Bangor Daily News column was right on the money about Portland's Maine State Pier concert venue. It's a smelly, cramped venue wedged in between two busy ferry docks, and concertgoers stand on hard cement pads like sardines. They can't see the stage nor hear the music.

Meanwhile in Bangor, for years we had the idyllic field that hosts the Waterfront Concerts and the American Folk Festival with colorful costumes and rhythms from around the world. Whenever I passed Main Street, I could see friends and neighbors having a great time dancing on the grass down by the river, and I heard beautiful music.

But look at what has happened here recently: Now I can't even see the river. There is a giant soul-sucking wooden fence blocking the entire field past Tim Hortons. The eyesore is like an ongoing construction-site, except we are told this urban blight is permanent. It's to prevent people sneaking free views of the concert inside.

I live right up the hill, and none of my friends ever minded hearing some free music a few nights a year. In fact, I miss it. Now the stage is tiny and turned away from my neighborhood. Now the concert area looks like a condemned inner-city development project. And worst, I miss seeing people out enjoying themselves by our city's gem: our waterway. Is this really better than having a few people peek in on the shows from the sidewalk? Tear down this wall.

John Picone
Bangor

O'Neill for Senate

Nurses are in a unique position to educate legislators about the complexities of the health care system. A legislator who is a nurse, one of the most trusted professions, brings that experience directly to change policies and shape the future of health care in our state. Democrat Moira O'Neill is that nurse. She is running for the Maine Senate in District 7, which includes most of Hancock County.

There are four core values that guide the profession: caring, integrity, diversity and excellence, according to the National League for Nursing. These days, voters I know are looking for the same values in our state leadership.

Dealing with the complicated health care environment requires an individual with the intellect, commitment, energy and the core values to identify problems and stick to the work of solving them. O'Neill has all

the skills, intellect and principles needed to be successful to represent us well in the Maine Senate.

O'Neill has all these strengths, and I urge others to join me in voting for her in November.

Mary Cahoon
Hancock

WRITE TO US

Letters must be 250 words or fewer and include a full name, town of residence and daytime phone number. OpEds may be 700 words. Letters may be edited or rejected for clarity, taste, libel and space. If a letter or OpEd is published, submissions by the same writer will not be considered for 60 days.

Letters may be sent to letters@bangordailynews.com. OpEds may be sent to OpEd@bangordailynews.com or P.O. Box 1329, Bangor, ME 04402-1329.

Poor coverage

I have little interest in the reporting of the presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton because the news media engages almost exclusively in "gotcha reporting." Their questions invariably are an attempt to embarrass the candidates, not to determine their stance on important issues.

Other than Trump's controversial position on immigration, and Clinton's misuse of email, I cannot recall a single thoughtful report on any policy initiative favored by either candidate. I suspect I am not alone in consequently ignoring the reporting on both Trump and Clinton.

Edmund Doherty
Island Falls

Pipeline silence

Where is the reporting on the Dakota Access Pipeline protests this August? It's baffling to compare the silence on the event with the endless coverage of the illegal and violent Bundy standoffs in Nevada and Oregon that readers were subjected to on two occasions. This is a peaceful, legal expression of free speech by thousands of individuals in Cannon Ball, North Dakota.

They are protesting the corporate and government taking unacceptable risks with the people's water, a precious and irreplaceable resource. The authorities are violating treaties to do so and are acting ahead of court consideration of the issue. The protesters are protecting us all who are faced with a global climate warming more rapidly than anticipated. They are not phony freedom fighters who

only live out west because their ancestors depended upon big government to remove the Native population by any means necessary.

Many thousands of supporters unable to be there wonder why the media is so quiet about this protest, and about the authorities' removal of water and limiting of toilet facilities in a camp with many elders and children. After all the sunny local hoopla about the Native communities harvesting wild blueberries in Maine, it's hard to miss the inherent racism this lack of coverage represents.

Jay Skriletz
Perry

Lawmakers lack a spine

We elect our representatives to do the work of government as we see fit. In my opinion, we expect them to do what most Mainers do when faced by a problem — solve it. Some of these problems are easy, and some are stinky and uncomfortable like removing a dead raccoon from under the house.

Maine has an embarrassing and stinky problem that is under our house and that has rightfully been given national publicity.

We do not need any further national embarrassment by having a Legislature that lacks the spine to do the job they should do. The integrity of the state of Maine is greater than its governor or legislators. Act now in a firm positive manner.

Peter Templeton
Blue Hill

Re-elect Cushing

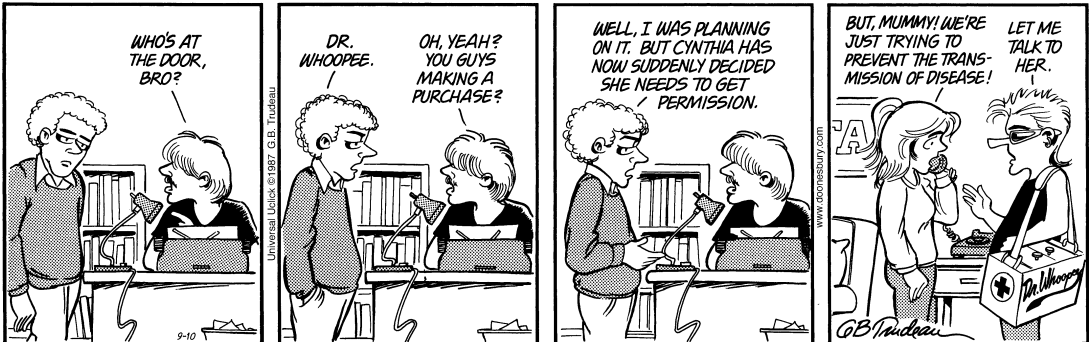
As a former state senator, I know what it takes to be effective and a good representative of Maine communities. I am pleased that we have this type of individual who now represents us in the Maine Senate. Republican Andre Cushing is a tireless worker for the people of southern Penobscot County and our state.

With the many changing needs of Maine and its rural communities, for job growth and support for our young people and seniors, it takes a good listener and a tenacious advocate to serve us well. These are just a few of the many skills that Cushing brings to bear.

I was honored to serve in the Maine Senate, and I am proud to know that Cushing is continuing to serve us in Augusta. Please make sure he returns to August to continue his work this November.

Betty Lou Mitchell
Etna

DOONESBURY



GARRY TRUDEAU