

Michael Bloomberg delivers a beat-down

BY JONATHAN CAPEHART
THE WASHINGTON POST

PHILADELPHIA — As is his wont, Michael Bloomberg didn't mince words. The billionaire former New York City mayor used his speech before the Democratic National Convention to build Hillary Clinton up as much as to tear Donald Trump down:

"The bottom line is: Trump is a risky, reckless and radical choice. And we can't afford to make that choice!

"Now, I know Hillary Clinton is not flawless; no candidate is. But she is the right choice — and the responsible choice — in this election. No matter what you may think about her politics or her record, Hillary Clinton understands that this is not reality television; this is reality. She understands the job of president. It involves finding solutions, not pointing fingers, and offering hope, not stoking fear."

Bloomberg is political pragmatism personified. He was a Democrat who switched party affiliation to Republican to run for mayor in 2001. He then became an independent in 2007 when he contemplated a run for the White House. The announcement of his party switch then captured what got him into politics 15 years ago and what motivated his convention speech Wednesday night. "Any successful elected executive knows that real results are more

important than partisan battles," he said then, "and that good ideas should take precedence over rigid adherence to any particular political ideology."

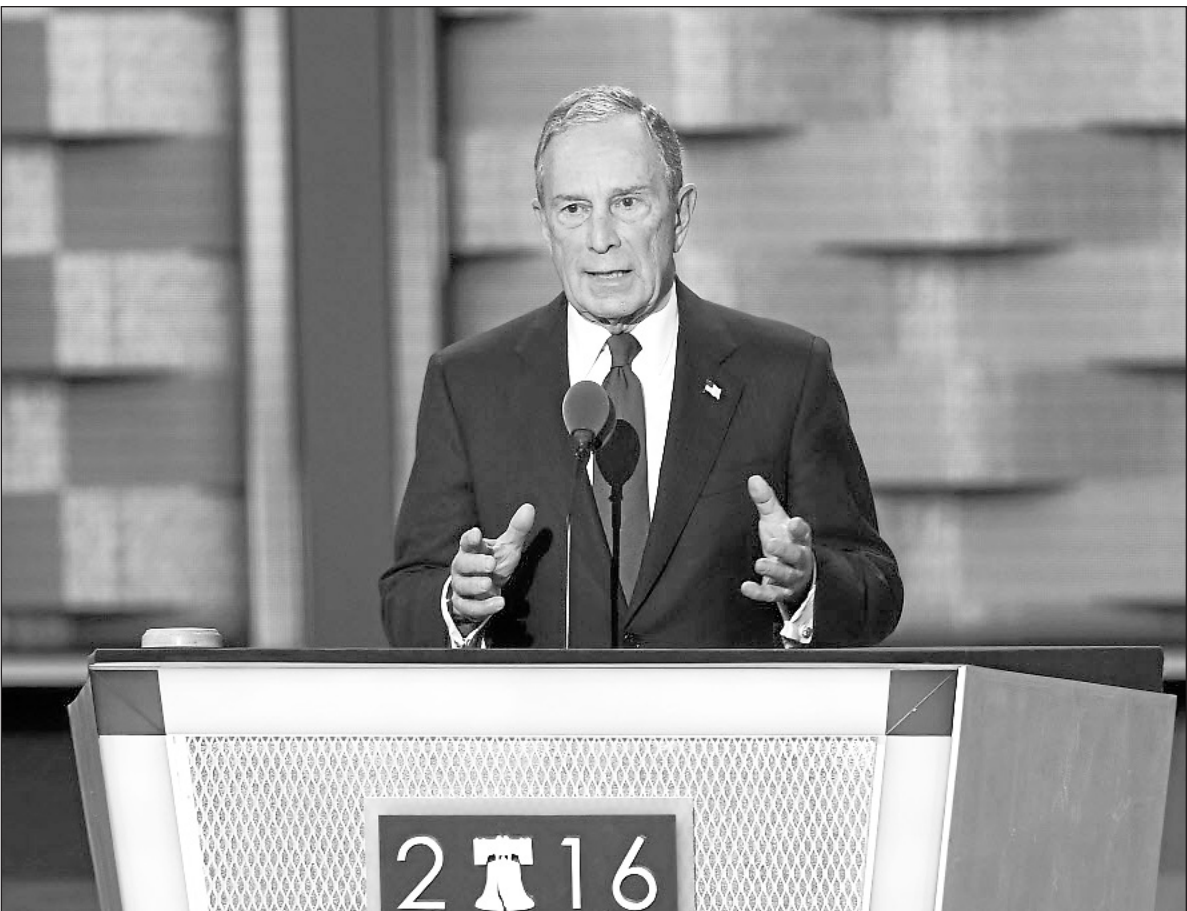
"Any successful elected executive knows that real results are more important than partisan battles."

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG

Trump, the man and his candidacy, is a violation of Bloomberg's life and political philosophy. Bloomberg slammed his fellow billionaire for his business practices that hurt real people and renders hollow his "make America great again" mantra. "I'm a New Yorker, and New Yorkers know a con when we see one," Bloomberg told the roaring crowd.

"I've built a business," Bloomberg said, "and I didn't start it with a million-dollar check from my father." Translation: I am a self-made man who worked hard for the success that I have and haven't forgotten it.

"Most of us don't pretend that we're smart enough to make every big decision by ourselves," Bloomberg said. Translation: I have a "very good brain," too. But I also know that good chief executives need to surround themselves with folks as smart, if not smarter, than they are to



OLIVIER DOULIERY | TNS

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg speaks during the third day of the Democratic National Convention at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia Wednesday.

make the right decisions.

Bloomberg made clear several times that he and Clinton don't agree on everything. But her penchant for consensus-building and problem-solving made her a great partner when she was in the Senate and he was in city hall. And he came to Philadelphia to urge independents to give her their votes.

"To me, this election is not a

choice between a Democrat and a Republican," Bloomberg said. "It's a choice about who is better to lead our country right now: better for our economy, better for our security, better for our freedom, and better for our future. There is no doubt in my mind that Hillary Clinton is the right choice this November."

Then he added this: "Let's elect

a sane, competent person with international experience."

Bloomberg doesn't put his prestige on the line for just anyone. And he doesn't suffer fools. That he came forth to vigorously vouch for Clinton shows how much of an unworthy and dangerous fool he thinks Trump is.

Jonathan Capehart is a Washington Post opinion writer.

Why do we care whether athletes are doping?

BY MELISSA
TANDIWE MYAMBO
THE CONVERSATION

The Rio Summer Olympics are only days away, but a cloud of performance-enhancing drug (PEDs) scandals hovers over the Olympic Games.

Earlier this year, Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova tested positive for meldonium, a drug that increases blood flow so more oxygen can be carried to muscle tissue. The Russian government was accused of sponsoring a state-run doping scheme that gave Russian athletes an unfair advantage at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. Now, for Rio 2016, the World Anti-Doping Agency wants all Russian athletes to be banned — and it's still unclear how many will be allowed to compete.

Although some studies have shown that public opinion on allowing athletes to dope is divided (some think it could increase entertainment value), most sporting authorities maintain that athletes should not dope.

It's an emotional topic, one that threatens the relationship between athletes and their fans. People worldwide felt a sense of extreme betrayal and disappointment when the extent of Lance Armstrong's doping was finally revealed. Studies have shown how even an *allegation* of use can severely damage an athlete's reputation. Meanwhile, we spend an extraordinary amount of energy on finding new ways to test for PEDs and studying the effect of doping on public attitudes toward sports.

But what's really behind our obsession with "clean" athletes and "clean" sports? What if it's more about us — and our relationship with technology — than them?

Technology enhances sports in other ways

What if sports officials just



REUTERS FILE

A technician holds a test tube with a blood sample at the Russian anti-doping laboratory in Moscow, Russia recently.

accepted PEDs as simply another "technology" that enhances the game? Couldn't PEDs simply be thought of as a technological advance — no different from equipment upgrades that improve an athlete's ability, like replacing wooden tennis rackets with modern, graphite ones?

After all, tennis now allows "hawkeye" technology to determine if a ball is in or out, no longer relying on the fallible eyesight of multiple linesmen and the umpire. FIFA has finally agreed to use goal-line technology to bolster the abilities of referees, who are often put in the position of judging whether a soccer goal has been scored from half a field away.

From a wider societal perspective, we use technology in virtually every aspect of our lives. GPS helps us get from one destination to the next, while we use the internet to order food and arrange dates.

Everyday life rife with performance enhancers

Of course, none of these technological advances is entering our bodies. Nor do they (on the surface, at least) have the potential to negatively influence our health.

Researchers believe that high doses of PEDs over sustained periods of time ad-

versely affect athletes' health. However, it's unethical to conduct controlled studies in case they do harm the athlete, so we can glean information only through observation. In other words, we *think* PEDs are harmful, but we don't know for sure. Perhaps legalizing PEDs would allow the proper authorities to make recommendations for safe dosages and prevent health risks. But this is unlikely to happen because of society's extraordinary investment in "clean" sports.

In one sense, it's remarkable that sports, alone, should have to maintain its performance standards *sans* enhancement.

We now live in a world in which it's generally acceptable for young women to use technologies like cosmetic surgery to improve their looks and advance their careers. See the Kardashians, whose "natural" endowments have been enhanced by modern medicine. Cosmetic surgery isn't illegal, although it's been shown to have negative and lasting physical and emotional side effects.

Drugs like Ritalin and Adderall are prescribed to (or used illegally by) students who want to improve their focus. Yet there's no drug-testing in place for students.

If beauty or concentration is no longer the result of lucky genes, does athletic prowess have to be? If technology can help sports officials perform their jobs more efficiently and fairly, why can it not be used to help athletes do their jobs more effectively?

The answer is quite simple: Athletes have to be human.

The last domino in a post-human world?

In a time when technology has become an integral part of the lives of billions of people, it's athletes who bear the burden of displaying essential human characteristics: vulnerability, grit, the courage to confront chal-

lenges and the ability to "dig deep," reaching beyond one's physical and mental limits to transcend adversity.

Yes, athletes are superhumans who possess rare physical gifts. But the emphasis is on the human. And perhaps athletes must exhibit distinctively human qualities so that they can help us believe that we are still better than machines.

Ironically, modern technology has helped us overcome many existential threats, whether it's refrigeration to preserve food or clean water that prevents water-borne disease. But it's also made us more insecure about our own significance and has caused about one-third of the population to feel some level of technophobia, or "abnormal fear or anxiety about the effects of advanced technology." The level of dependence on technology is such that researchers have documented phenomena such as "smartphone separation anxiety."

As the news broke about Maria Sharapova's doping admission, there was also a headline announcing a major accomplishment for artificial intelligence: Google's AlphaGo went head to head against the human champion, Lee Sedol, in the complicated Chinese game of Go — and won resoundingly.

This has stoked familiar fears: Who are we if a machine can do what we do, but better?

Our attitudes toward technology are also reflected in popular culture. Hit shows like the British-American series "Humans" convey contemporary anxieties about technology. Featuring "synths" — robots that are almost indistinguishable from humans — the show explores a fear that has been successfully mined by sci-fi writers for decades: When technology replicates our fundamental abilities, what does it mean to be human? Do we simply become the "Wizard of Oz's" rusty Tin



REUTERS FILE

Cyclist Lance Armstrong is interviewed by Oprah Winfrey in 2013, when he finally admitted to using performance enhancing drugs during his cycling career.



JAYNE KAMIN | ONCEA | USA TODAY

Tennis star Maria Sharapova speaks to the media announcing a failed drug test after the Australian Open during a news conference in Los Angeles in 2016.

Man in search of the human heart?

It's why fundamental human characteristics — intangibles such as altruism, love, empathy (in addition to irrational grit and extraordinary willpower) — become symbolic of what it truly means to be human. Nearly all films and books that deal with robots or aliens end on this note. We're humans just because we are. We want to believe that no machine can replicate the breadth of the human heart.

And that is what we expect most of all athletes, that they display heart.

If athletes succumb to widespread usage of PEDs, our fundamental conception

of ourselves as human also becomes tarnished; apparently, we can't afford that right now.

Presidential candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders keep telling us that "the game" is rigged against us. So perhaps we need to believe that there is still such a thing, somewhere, as a level playing field.

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Cianchette

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Clinton. The DNC email hack shows exactly why storing classified information on private, internet-connected servers is a bad idea. If foreign adversaries obtained top secret materials due to her, in the words of FBI Director James Comey, "extreme carelessness," then she has affirmatively harmed our nation. And if Trump's call to the hacker community works, resulting in a

cache of her deleted "personal" emails being posted online? Then we will know someone, somewhere has classified American information because of her recklessness.

If that comes to pass, it is just one more reason why she should not become the first female president.

Michael Cianchette is former chief counsel to Gov. Paul LePage, a Navy reservist who served in Afghanistan and in-house counsel to a number of businesses in southern Maine.

Doc

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made a bad decision." The warden admonished Doc: "You should be ashamed of yourself for teaching a youngster how to fish illegally. What's this world coming to when adults can't be better role models?" Doc said nothing and accepted the \$25 fine. "The warden was furious with me," Doc told me years later. "But if I had told the truth and blamed Jimmy, he might have doubled the fine."

I miss my old friend and

his endless fishing tips and stories. Doc taught me to be humble, grateful, hard working, loyal, loving and generous. Fly-fishing and life lessons are synonymous, he often reminded Jimmy and me. Each teaches the importance of patience, faith in the unseen and capitalizing when opportunities strike.

"In fly-fishing and in life," he said, "the memorable moments, big and small, are captured when you're fully invested in the present."

Ron Joseph is a retired Maine wildlife biologist. He lives in Waterville.

Steed

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Clinton was not my first choice, but she is most definitely the best choice available to appoint judges, carefully consider domestic policies and engage in foreign policy.

It doesn't mean the movement stops, but we have the luxury of deciding what sort of leadership under which we continue it — a liberal leader with whom we don't fully agree or an emerging fascist who has a lot of fans in Russia and the

white nationalist crowd in his camp and who, we can imagine, won't have any qualms about crushing everything we stand for.

Imagine Gov. Paul LePage but with access to Supreme Court appointments and nuclear weapons.

I have trouble seeing how there is even a choice in this election.

Alex Steed has written about and engaged in politics since he was a teenager. He's an owner-partner of a Portland-based content production company and lives with his family, dogs and garden in Cornish.