

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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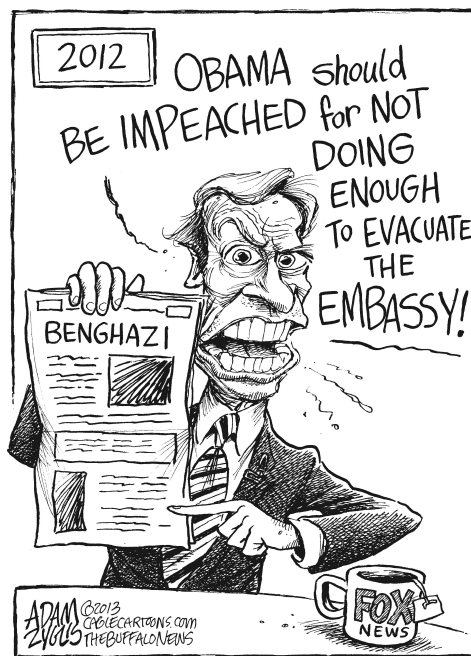
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PRESS&DAKOTAN



OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

De-Escalating The 'War On Drugs'

SEATTLE TIMES (Aug. 12): Attorney General Eric Holder's speech to the American Bar Association in San Francisco was a bit like hearing from a stockbroker after trading has closed.

"Well, of course the market went down." Well, of course the U.S. needs to rethink drug laws and enforcement.

Decades after America righteously declared a zero-tolerance policy toward all drug crimes and nonviolent crimes involving drugs, Holder and others want to stop the abuses.

Support for being "Smart on Crime," in the AG's words, is aimed at undoing laws that maintain "a vicious cycle of poverty, criminality and incarceration" that "traps too many Americans and weakens too many communities."

Under the policy proposal, fewer drug offenders would face long sentences, fewer would go to federal prison and judges would have more discretion.

Substantial credit for this change of heart might truly go to the bloated, unsustainable expense of a federal prison system bursting at the seams and concentric circles of prison costs the policies impose on local jurisdictions.

These policies are on a path to end in the same way they began, with broad bipartisan support. Republican President Reagan's "War on Drugs" took shape in a heated competition with Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neill, D-Mass. ...

Holder's policy direction has stirred questions about the need to replace U.S. drug czar Gil Kerlikowske, formerly Seattle's police chief, as he leaves the post for another federal job.

Holder has bipartisan support in Congress for change. Maybe something actually will happen to reform laws that have ruined lives and budgets.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.
- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.
- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.
- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, Aug. 15, the 227th day of 2013. There are 138 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On August 15, 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair opened in upstate New York.

On this date: In 1057, Macbeth, King of Scots, was killed in battle by Malcolm, the eldest son of King Duncan, whom Macbeth had slain.

In 1483, the Sistine Chapel was consecrated by Pope Sixtus IV.

In 1769, Napoleon Bonaparte was born on the island of Corsica.

In 1812, the Battle of Fort Dearborn took place as Potawatomi warriors attacked a U.S. military garrison of about 100 people. (Most of the garrison was killed, while the remainder were taken prisoner.)

In 1914, the Panama Canal opened to traffic.

In 1935, humorist Will Rogers and aviator Wiley Post were killed when their airplane crashed near Point Barrow in the Alaska Territory.

In 1945, in a radio address, Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced that his country had accepted terms of surrender for ending World War II.

In 1947, India became independent after some 200 years of British rule.

In 1961, as workers began constructing a Berlin Wall made of concrete, East German soldier Conrad Schumann leapt to freedom over a tangle of barbed wire.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon announced a 90-day freeze on wages, prices and rents. Bahrain declared its independence from Britain.

In 1974, a gunman attempted to shoot South Korean President Park Chung-hee during a speech; although Park was unhurt, his wife was struck and killed, along with a teenage girl. (The gunman was later executed.)

In 1998, 29 people were killed by a car bomb that tore apart the center of Omagh, Northern Ireland; a splinter group calling itself the Real IRA claimed responsibility.

Ten years ago: Bouncing back from the largest blackout in U.S. history, cities from the Midwest to Manhattan restored power to millions of people.

Five years ago: Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili grudgingly signed a U.S.-backed truce with Russia, even as he denounced the Russians as invading barbarians and accused the West of all but encourag-

ing them to overrun his country. Michael Phelps won his sixth gold medal with his sixth world record, in the 200-meter individual medley at the Summer Olympics. American Nastia Liukin won the gold in women's gymnastics; friend and teammate Shawn Johnson was second. Record producer Jerry Wexler, who coined the term "rhythm and blues," died in Sarasota, Fla. at age 91. National Public Radio commentator Leroy Sievers, who'd shared his struggle with cancer, died at his Maryland home at age 53.

One year ago: Felix Hernandez pitched the Seattle Mariners' first perfect game and the 23rd in baseball history, overpowering the Tampa Bay Rays in a 1-0 victory; it was the third perfect game and sixth no-hitter of the season. The United States broke a 75-year winless streak at Mexico's intimidating Azteca Stadium with an 80th minute goal and a series of saves that delivered a 1-0 victory.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Rose Marie is 90. Political activist Phyllis Schlafly is 89. Actor Mike Connors is 88. Game show host Jim Lange is 81. Actress Lori Nelson is 80. Civil rights activist Vernon Jordan is 78. Actor Jim Dale is 78. Actress Pat Priest is 77. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer is 75. U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., is 75. Musician Pete York (Spencer Davis Group) is 71. Author-journalist Linda Ellerbee is 69. Songwriter Jimmy Webb is 67. Rock singer-musician Tom Johnston (The Doobie Brothers) is 65. Actress Phyllis Smith is 64. Britain's Princess Anne is 63. Actress Tess Harper is 63. Actor Larry Mathews is 58. Actor Zeljko Ivanek is 56. Actor-comedian Rondell Sheridan is 55. Rock singer-musician Matt Johnson (The The) is 52. Movie director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu is 50. Country singer Angela Rae (Wild Horses) is 47. Actor Peter Hermann is 46. Actress Debra Messing is 45. Actor Anthony Anderson is 43. Actor Ben Affleck is 41. Singer Mikey Graham (Boyzone) is 41. Actress Natasha Henstridge is 39. Actress Nicole Paggi is 36. Figure skater Jennifer Kirk is 29. Latin pop singer Belinda is 24. Rock singer Joe Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 24. Actor-singer Carlos Pena is 24. Actress Jennifer Lawrence is 23. Rap DJ Smoove da General (Cali Swag District) is 23.

Thought for Today: "To feel that one has a place in life solves half the problem of contentment." — George Edward Woodberry, American poet, critic and educator (1855-1930).

FROM THE BIBLE

And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Mark 1:18. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Priorities

Mary Pat Bierle, Yankton
Regarding the *Press & Dakotian's* coverage of Aug. 12 Yankton School Board meeting, it is interesting to see where the community's priorities lie.

The bottom line is that the Yankton School District provides no liability insurance coverage for teachers during the YHS homecoming parade. Any accidents resulting from student behavior — or misbehavior — become the teacher's personal financial responsibility. That is wrong. How can the School Board require teachers to per-

form an activity for which it fails to provide — at a minimum — liability coverage?

Our schools are not entertainment centers. They are not babysitting services. They are educational institutions.

How ironic that, in this same article, in a short paragraph buried at the end, reference is made to this year's YSD test scores, which are above the state average. Clearly, our teachers are doing the job for which they were hired.

Perhaps the Yankton community needs to reassess its priorities — as do some members of the School Board.

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — Three years out and you'd think the deed was done: Madame President Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton.

She's everywhere these days because:

(a) It's August; (b) Reporters are bored with President Obama; (c) Reporters are bored with Joe Biden; (d) Clintons are never boring.

Correct. Op-ed columns are filled with advice about what Hillary needs to do. She needs a narrative. A message. It can't be that she's a Clinton or a woman. It has to be ...

What? Here's a thought: She can save the world.

Yes, all right, perhaps a trifle hyperbolic, but hear me out. And keep in mind that this works only as a long game. We may not live to see salvation but one has to start somewhere. Thus far, invasions, bunker-busting mega-bombs and killer drones seem not to be having the desired effect.

Let's begin with a working (and provable) premise: Women, if allowed to be fully equal to men, will bring peace to the planet. This is not so far-fetched a notion. One, men have been at it for thousands of years, resulting in millions and millions of corpses. Two, countries where women are most oppressed and abused are also the least stable.

Three, as women become more empowered, especially financially, countries become more stable. When women have money, they can feed their families, get health care, educate their children, start businesses and so on. The ripple effect is stronger families, stronger communities, and ultimately saner nations.

This fact, reinforced by numerous economic studies, has not escaped the attention of corporate America, which is investing heavily to reach women in developing countries. As Muhtar Kent, the CEO of Coca-Cola, put it: "Women are already the most dynamic and fastest-growing economic force in the world today."

What does this have to do with Hillary? Quite a bit.

Rewinding the tape to 1995 at the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, then-first lady Hillary Clinton empowered women as never before with just a few words: "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all."

Imagine that. Well, of course, we can imagine that. Our Founding Fathers created the instru-



Kathleen PARKER

ments to codify this concept, even if it took a while to imprint on our psyches and to be reflected in our laws. But elsewhere, in places where women are tortured, abused, sold into slavery and disfigured, all to the "glory" of men, it was a trumpet blast from heaven's gate that caused the earth to tremble: Women are human beings, too.

How do you say "wow" in Lingala? At the time, it was a revolutionary statement and helps explain why Hillary is one of the most recognized and revered individuals in the world.

While Americans obsess about Hillary's hair and married life, others have been studying her for inspiration. To millions, she is a role model and a warrior for women's right to self-determination. As secretary of state, she continued the work of her predecessors, Condoleezza Rice and Madeleine Albright, who first insisted that women's rights be part of our foreign policy, and then pushed further. Under Hillary's watch, Obama made permanent the Office of Global Women's Issues and appointed longtime Hillary colleague Melanne Verveer as ambassador-at-large.

These strides in soft diplomacy may get less ink than, say, John Kerry's progress toward Middle East peace talks, but they are no less important in the longer term. Far newer than yet another round of "peace talks," necessary though they be, are the implications of the global explosion in women's economic and, therefore, political power.

Whether one likes or dislikes Hillary, few dispute that she has matured in her public role. Her resume can be topped by few and the symbolic power of electing a woman president — especially this woman — can't be overestimated. Many doubtless shudder at the prospect of Hillary Clinton as the most powerful person in the world, but we've done worse. For what it's worth, many in the Bush White House said privately they hoped Hillary would win because they felt she was the better prepared to handle international challenges.

Whatever transpires during the next three years, we can be sure the world's women are watching closely. In 2007 when I traveled through the Middle East with then-first lady Laura Bush, every woman I met was riveted by the U.S. presidential election and wanted to talk about only this: *Will Hillary win?*

In 2008, it seemed possible. In 2016, barring a Benghazi surprise, it seems probable.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleen-parker@washpost.com.

Point Of View

Obamacare Is Ruinous Plan

BY MICHAEL P. FEIMER

Obamacare is a prescription for the demise of health care in the U.S. as we know it.

The relentless pursuit to dismantle our health care system is beginning to take on a new face. "We have to pass this bill so we can see what is really in it," Nancy Pelosi comment of the decade. The Democratic Congress rammed this bill through without one word of advice from the Republicans, and not one Republican voted for it. Congressman and senators alike have listened to their constituents sing the same song — we do not want Obamacare. Now even the unions don't want anything to do with it.

It should be our government's objective to understand the issues before giving recommendation to change the status quo. Obamacare does not address the issues or the systemic problems of escalating health care — in fact, the consequences of this bill will eliminate coverage for many, cost the American people millions of dollars along with the loss of innovative medicine and the decline of the 40-hour work week.

The real issues that need the attention are state specific and needs to be addressed at the state level. The private insurance companies can supply the products needed to provide insurance coverage to all Americans, and this system is in place now.

Insurance companies are now mandated to eliminate underwriting for everyone, and that will cause premiums will escalate, as it has done. The best analogy to forgo underwriting is when banks were told to ease up financial requirements for homeowners and the Community Reinvestment Act was born. It was another federal program that Jimmy Carter passed in 1977 — we all know what has happened with that small intrusion into the free market. We are still in the downward spiral of the housing market because of the easing up of bank underwriting guidelines.

It will not take that long to feel the effects of Obamacare eliminating underwriting guidelines. It has already happen — for my group of business that are under one contract the 2014 Obamacare cost of just the fees (taxes) are as follows:

- Annual Health Insurer Tax — \$244,424
- Exchange User Tax — \$239,048
- Transitional Reinsurance Tax — \$130,914
- Patient Centered Outcome Research Institute Tax — \$4,156
- Risk Adjustment Tax — \$2,078
- Grand Total — \$620,620 New Taxes and we get nothing for it.

This relentless attack on health insurance companies is unprecedented in American history. Never before has a president gone so far as to dismantle an American intuition with the end game to take control of 17 percent of the gross domestic product. As I have pointed out before, insurance companies do not create the charges

from the medical providers; they negotiate the bill down and make sure all your bills are paid. Obamacare should be concentrating on "escalating costs" while remembering that insurance companies work off 2 1/2 percent profit to run their operations and take the risk.

The evolution of health care in the U.S. has always been based on the free market — the innovation of the entrepreneurial business enterprise. The innovative procedures and miraculous discoveries have always stemmed from the private enterprise and they in turn spread their innovation around the world. We are the leaders and government provided the protection that allows this free spirit to invent, practice and continue the quest for the next miracle to be discovered.

That is what is really being threatened. Can you name the last innovative product, process or accomplishment of the federal government?

Government has its place in a society — it provides laws and structure, protects its people and keeps interstate commerce fair and equitable for all to utilize roads and transportation. The free market creates the need, innovates products and provides services throughout the country. Obamacare is blurring the lines of private enterprise and government job to provide security for its citizens that will not work.

At first everyone thought this health care reform legislation was to really help provide coverage to the uninsured — if that was the case we could accomplish that with a stroke of the pen demanding each state to set up high risk pools (as we have in South Dakota) and make those who do not have the coverage buy into it. For a fraction of the cost of this massive Obamacare bill, we could insure everyone through private insurers.

Sen. Thune is right to oppose Obamacare. It is a massively destructive government takeover of health care; causing millions of people to lose their employer coverage — employees being forced to a 29-hour work week without coverage and for everyone thousands of tax dollars going into the black hole of the federal government.

Here's a little food for thought: The federal government runs the following:

- Medicare — it is broke
- Medicaid — it is broke
- Social Security — it is almost broke
- Amtrak — it is broke
- US Postal Service — it is broke

Do you want the feds running your health insurance?

Mike Feimer is a 1971 graduate of Yankton High School and holds an AA, BS and Masters Degree from USD. He has more than 28 years experience in the health insurance industry along with 14 years working in an actuarial dept. researching, developing and implementing insurance products.