

Opinion



**Free Press
Viewpoint**

Taking out bosses would stop pirates

The rescue Sunday of Capt. Richard Phillips from the hands of Somali pirates is but a small step toward a solution to the problem plaguing ocean transport off Arabia and the Horn of Africa.

Perhaps the pirate kingpins will think twice before sending their minions out to capture another American-flag transport, but it's not likely.

Already this year, more than 50 pirate attacks have been reported in the Indian Ocean. While last year, most attacks occurred close to shore, lately pirates have been reaching out hundreds of miles to find victims.

No one is immune. Pirates have taken yachts and sailboats, tankers and freighters registered around the world. This time, they went too far.

Faced with a U.S. Navy warship, and more on the way, they could not escape with their hostage. Nor could their masters rescue them.

Navy Seals took out three of the four pirates on a lifeboat bobbing in the sea — the fourth was in custody — and rescued Capt. Phillips.

While that was cause for celebration here and around the world, the sobering truth is that more than 200 people remain prisoner and hostage to Somali pirates.

The pirates, increasingly bold, have been using larger "mother ships" to get out farther from shore, expanding the area that world navies have to patrol against them. That makes the task of stopping these attacks almost impossible.

Last week, the pirates tried to send captured ships to the aid of their brothers caught in the lifeboat. The attempt failed, but it was daring.

The solution will be the same that one of the nation's first naval heroes, Commodore Stephen Decatur, applied to the Barbary Pirates in 1815.

Today's pirate gangs are run by wealthy crime lords ashore in Somalia. Shooting or capturing their henchmen will not be enough. The world will have to take direct action against the bosses.

Negotiations will be a waste of time and effort. Force, they will understand.

All civilized nations should join together to pursue this end. We should sink the pirate ships, shoot or capture the crews and, if it comes to that, bomb or capture the leaders' headquarters.

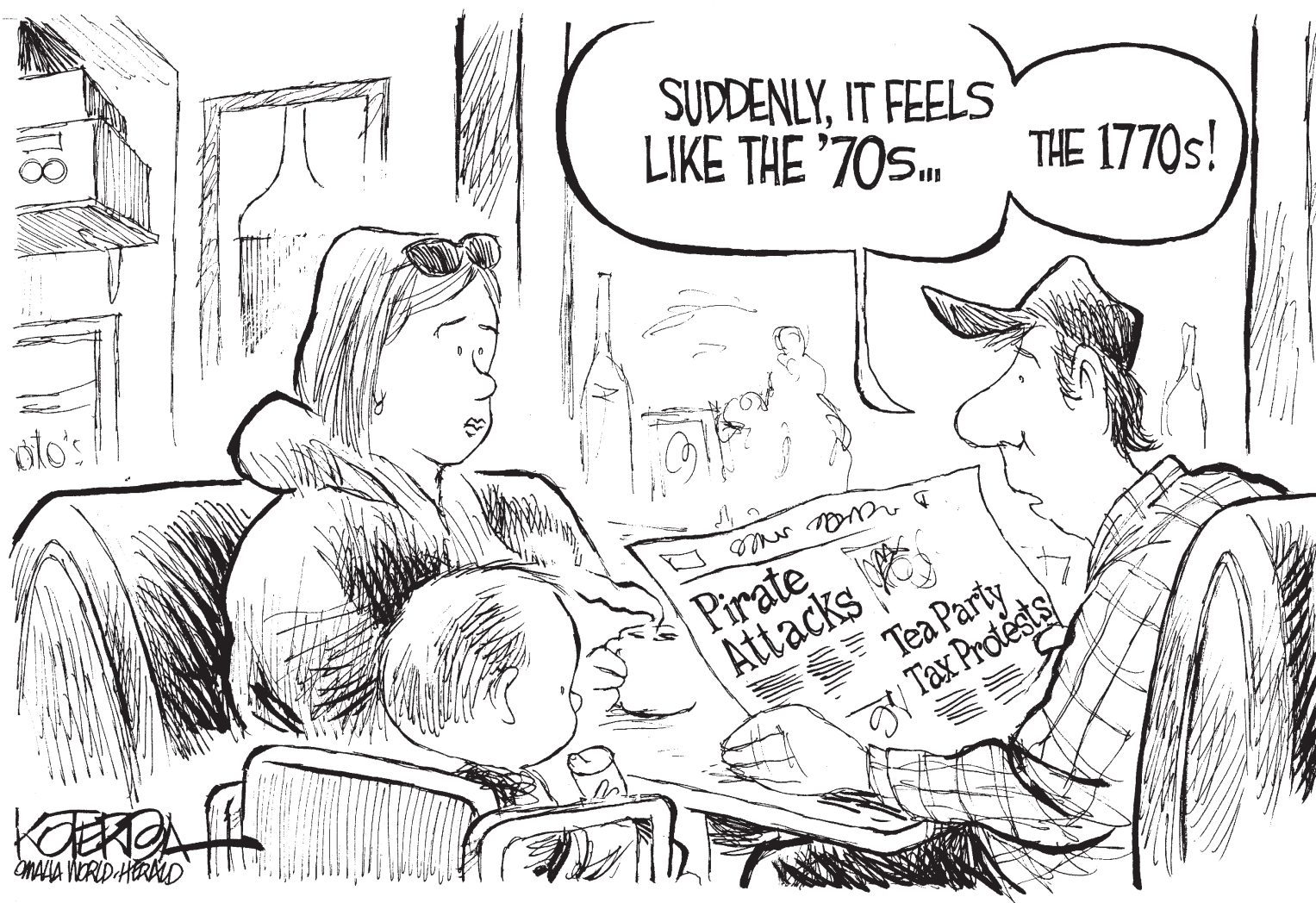
An overwhelming show of force will be required. A huge area of the sea is at stake, and years of thin patrols by world navies have proven ineffective. Every trading nation — American, European, Asian or African, Christian or Muslim, has a stake in this battle.

These pirates are criminals, not warriors. They fight for booty, not religion.

Now that we know we are not immune, the United States will need to get involved. Command and coordination should be joint, and effective.

Nothing has changed in 200 years. Piracy cannot be allowed to interfere with maritime traffic, on which the world's economy depends. No group of criminals should be allowed to hold the world hostage.

Sunday was a good start. It's time to get this battle going.
— Steve Haynes



It's time to clean out the receipt drawer

It's that time of year again. Time to find out if we owe the government or the government owes us.

Gosh, do I ever hate dealing with the mess of getting ready to make out taxes. I guess when it comes right down to it, I really don't have to do much, since someone else actually makes out my taxes for me. It's just getting everything ready to take to him I hate.

As I have said before, I'm not a mathematician and I'm not a bookkeeper, either. However, I do keep all of my receipts. I learned through a lot of bad experiences that you shouldn't throw receipts away. I put them in a drawer all month, and then at the first of each month, when I'm paying the bills that aren't automatically paid by my bank, I carefully file everything in the appropriate folders. Then, at the end of the year, all I have to do is add everything up and take it to my tax man.

I guess my system isn't as bad as some peo-



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

ple, who don't file receipts at all. I remember a story my cousin Doris told me about Uncle Arno and her mother, my Aunt Genevieve. Arno was my mom's older brother and Genevieve was their older sister.

Doris said that every year, just before time to mail in tax forms, Uncle Arno would show up at Aunt Genevieve's door with his receipts in a couple of cigar boxes. He and Aunt Genevieve would spend hours sorting through the receipts, piling them in the appropriate piles and then adding everything up in order to make out Arno's taxes so they could get them mailed before the deadline.

Doris said sometimes Genevieve would complain to her about Arno's bad record keeping and the fact that he waited so late to get started, but she always felt that Genevieve actually enjoyed spending that special time with her brother. They seemed to make a party out of it, with the coffee pot and the tea pot going, and there were always cookies there or something to munch on.

Now days, some people zip their taxes out very quickly on their computers, or make out their own forms with no problems at all. But for me, just taking everything in and leaving it with my tax guy is the best I can do. I keep thinking that sometime he might bring out the coffee and cookies, but so far he never has.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.

Have you noticed the national debt lately?

To the Editor:

Some of you may recall me talking about these things several years ago. I have never stopped thinking about them, but now it's imperative these subjects be brought to the forefront for discussion. The events of the last few months demand it.

We have a Congress in Washington running rampant over the Constitution and our future generations. How in the world are our grandchildren, even our great-great-great-great-grandchildren, ever going to pay off the debt we are running up?

The Bozo in the White House (oops, I apologize, I mean the resident, has proposed a spending bill of \$20 trillion over a 10 year period. This president has more than doubled our national debt from roughly \$4.5 trillion to more than \$9 trillion in less than 60 days. He has saddled this country with a staggering \$20 trillion debt that is equal to (or greater than) all the debts incurred by all the presidents from George Washington to George W. Bush — and he didn't give it a second thought.

This is unconscionable and un-American. This basically makes slaves of our kids, slaves to the national government, a government that gave us liberty as one of its three main principles. Now, if our progeny are to pay this debt, what kind of Liberty would they have? None. What kind of Life would they have? A life of nothing but debt. Would they be able to Pursue Happiness? I don't think so.

Right now each person (newborns, the elderly, the destitute, the disabled, all included) in the United States "owes" over \$130,000 apiece. It may be more. You would need a 30-year loan to pay off that amount of money. But that is only for this year's budget. What about the next nine? Or the next 100 or more?

Have we become an entire nation that wants to depend on our illustrious so-called "leaders" in Washington? This country was founded on the idea that every man could take care of his own family and business, obey the law and work for what he needed. The American people have become lax at making our representatives in Washington work "For The People."

They are not working for the best interest of all people at all. If they were, they would



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

not be raising taxes and giving themselves pay raises when the rest of us can't get a raise without working to our highest potential — and sometimes not even then.

A lot of them have been in Washington way too long. They have lost touch with the people they govern. The only recourse we have is our vote on election day. The only way to save this country from its leaders is to vote.

I know a lot of people don't think their vote will count. Well, if everyone thought that way, we'd be in a much more dire state of affairs. If more people were registered to vote, us "little people" would have a much bigger voice in Washington.

Folks, we all need to wake up and make our opinions and voices known in Washington and in Topeka. Write to your senators and representatives. Even in our own little towns, if enough voices are raised, they will listen. As for me and my family, I have just begun. When we send in our tax forms this year, a bag of tea will be enclosed.

Do me two favors will you? Please add a tea bag to you return when you send it in. Also, sit down with a calculator and figure up just how much you pay in taxes. Include the state and federal taxes on your paycheck, taxes on utilities, taxes on gas for your vehicle, taxes on anything you buy (sales tax), your property taxes on your house and/or car, liquor taxes, taxes when you buy or own farms or livestock or machinery, business taxes you pay. Remember the saying, "taxed to death"? Well, add those death taxes too.

We as Americans are being taxed to death right now. Can we really afford an increase in any taxes? It's time to be heard.

Jari Skiles, Colby

Keep children safe

To the Editor:

We all want children to be safe and have healthy childhood experiences. However, an increasing number of children are exposed to intensive stress-like child abuse and neglect that can be devastating to child development and have lifelong consequences.

Programs and strategies like home visiting, parent education, mental health services, adequate availability of affordable daycare and substance abuse treatment all aid in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

As our nation recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, our hope is to change the way our state thinks about prevention — focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize prevention right from the start. One simple, outward sign is to wear a blue ribbon. You can get your free ribbon, as well as learn more about prevention efforts by visiting the Oberlin City Library or calling Smart Start Northwest Kansas, (785) 465-9103.

Maureen Ostmeier, director
Smart Start Northwest Kansas
Colby

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

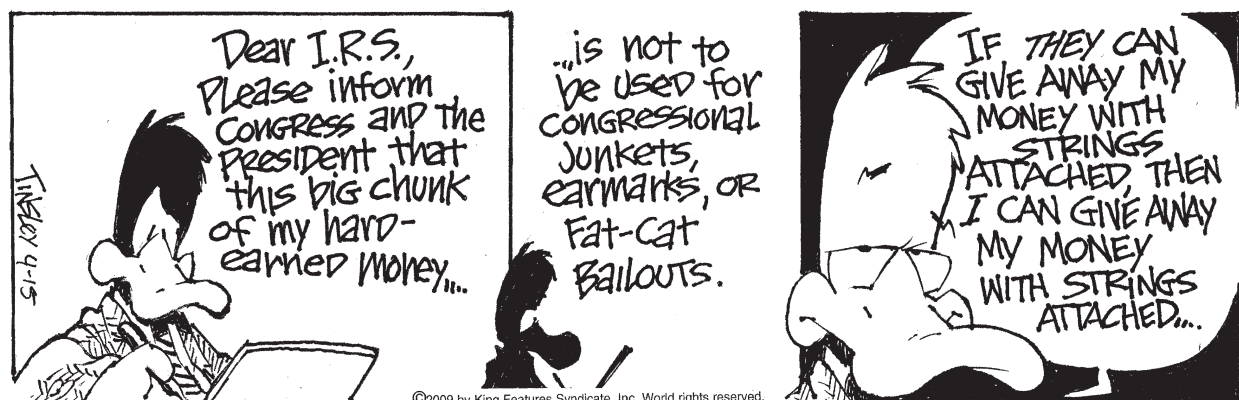
We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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