

OPINION

ETHICS

Hillary renews tenuous relationship with truth

If the truth will set you free, then what about the opposite? Are there bad consequences for lying? Is it harmful to believe lies?

In government based on the consent of the governed, what could go wrong? What happens when politicians and government authorities continually lie?

The Associated Press recently reported on the inevitable effects when truth telling goes out of fashion: "Americans' confidence in all three branches of government is at or near record lows, according to a major survey that has measured attitudes on the subject for 40 years."

One might ask, "What difference, at this point, does it make?" But shouldn't it be frightening to reach the point where truth no longer matters? Has that day dawned?

"Voters don't consider campaign promises to be real promises," says historian H.W. Brands of the University of Texas at Austin. "They recognize that they're buying a used car from somebody."

Although it may seem we live in extraordinary times, the truth is that truth telling and politics long have had a strained relationship. Bipartisan, certainly.

"I offer my opponents a bargain: If they will stop telling lies

about us, I will stop telling the truth about them," Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson said on the campaign stump in 1952.

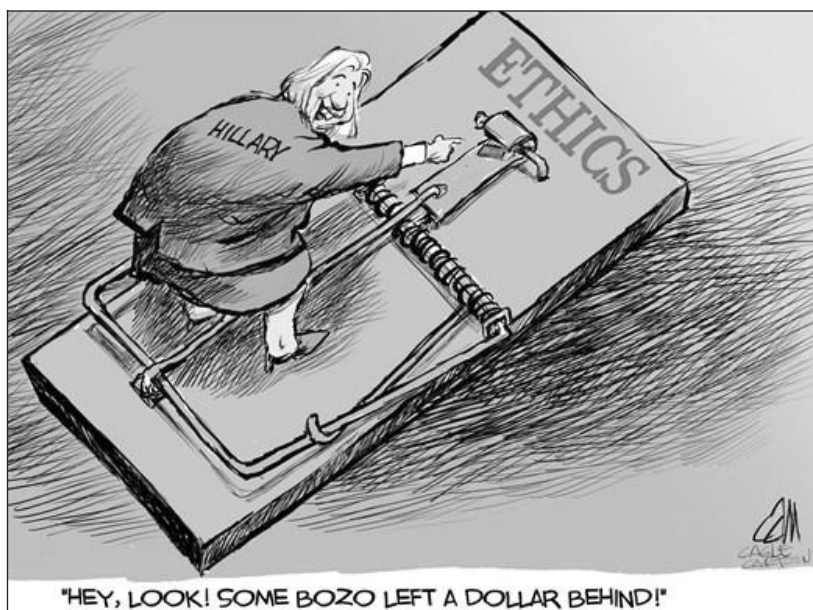
Lies are effective because there's nothing like success to extend bad habits. Shrewd manipulators advance lies, disguised as truths, to enrapture the masses, to accumulate wealth and to gain control. Adolf Hitler's great propagandist, Joseph Goebbels, made the Big Lie a big success.

"Through clever and constant application of propaganda, people can be made to see paradise as hell, and also the other way round, to consider the most wretched sort of life as paradise," Hitler reportedly observed. The Israelite prophet Isaiah 2,600 years earlier had a different perspective: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil."

If truth is no longer absolute, it becomes not just pragmatic, but proper, to tell people what tickles their ears. In Ferguson, Mo., "Don't Shoot Hands Up" T-shirts, protests and anger after a white cop shot a black man in self-defense persist long after the lie was exposed on which they were based. We're still waiting for the T-shirts imprinted with an apology.

That brings us to the most recent crisis of trust.

Hillary Clinton says she circumvented normal protocols for securing email as a matter of convenience. She insists she has provided every email, or at least



CAMERON CARDOW, CAGLE CARTOONS

paper versions, related to her stint as secretary of state while destroying only those regarding personal matters. She said there was not an iota of classified information in any of the 60,000 emails housed on her private server. Therefore, Clinton assures an anxious nation, there were no security breaches.

Is this true? How are we to know? She's destroyed half those 60,000 emails and won't allow anyone to inspect the hard drive that housed them. Apparently, Clinton wants us to trust her.

The likely 2016 Democratic nominee for president emerged in politics working on the Nixon-Watergate investigation. Her supervisor, Jerry Zeifman, a lifelong Democrat, laid her off, but said in interviews later, "If I

had the power to fire her, I would have fired her," adding that he "advised her that I would not - could not recommend her for any further positions." Zeifman said Clinton "was a liar," "unethical" and "a dishonest lawyer." Two decades later when she ran for Senate, New York Times Columnist William Safire, admittedly a libertarian conservative, said she was "a congenital liar ... compelled to mislead, and to ensnarl her subordinates and friends in a web of deceit."

From her strained account of the American deaths at Benghazi in 2012 to the even less-credible explanation two decades ago for a 10,000-percent profit in commodities trading by "reading the Wall Street Journal," Clinton seems dogged by implausible

rationalizations.

She's in good company. Her husband, the 42nd president, wagged his finger at a national TV audience and lied about having sex with "that woman," Monica Lewinsky, just months before being impeached for perjury, a charge sufficient to result in suspension of his law license, if not conviction by the Senate.

Now, Hillary Clinton hopes to succeed Barack Obama, perhaps the record-holder for utterances that don't pass the smell test: "If you like your plan, you can keep it,"

"Here's what happened [at Benghazi] ... you had a video that was released," "I didn't set a red line" on Syria. Rather than list every tall tale, let's stipulate that the architect of his signature health care plan openly boasted about how they put one over on the easily fooled rubes.

Mrs. Clinton may be up to that lofty (or low) standard. "People don't really trust the Clintons," a former Clinton administration official - who would only speak anonymously - told the Los Angeles Times.

Perhaps we just know much more these days about the people we elect. On the other hand, as millions of Americans prepare to celebrate Easter, it may be instructive to recall the person whose name lives in infamy for asking Jesus, "What is truth?" He was a government official.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fear another Clinton? Another Bush would be worse

I find it amusing that your staff columnist Troy Senik, letter-writers and even the comedians at Fox News are so afraid of Hillary Clinton that they express the belief that America can do so much better than electing another Clinton to the White House - despite the fact that Bill Clinton was one of the best presidents we have had.

Never have I heard or read that electing another Bush would result in the same doomsday as that being hurled at the Clintons.

Bush 41 was a mediocre president at best; Bush 43, a total disaster, with the lowest approval rating ever.

If the prospect of another Clinton presidency is poison to conservatives, the possibility of another Bush in office is absolutely toxic.

Ed Pyle
Laguna Niguel

HARD BARGAINERS?

Why should we trust President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry to come up with a reasonable nuclear wea-

pons deal with Iran? Remember, this is the same administration that traded five major terrorists from Guantanamo for one alleged deserter, Bowe Bergdahl. This is the same administration that said that we should agree to stringent pollution standards with China but gave China until 2030 to consider rolling back its emissions. If I had a chance to negotiate with Obama, I would send a limo to pick him up.

Chris Baysinger
Orange

CAMPAIGN SIGN BLIGHT

Anyone who follows politics in Irvine is aware of the ongoing audit of Great Park expenditures.

Unfortunately, unnamed critics of Larry Agran see fit to litter our public right-of-ways and green spaces with their orange "Agranaudit.com" signs. We first saw these signs during last fall's election cycle that led to Agran's defeat and exit from the Irvine City Council.

This past Sunday, hundreds of the ugly signs from the anonymous poster reappeared city-wide. In one short stretch of roadway near rustic Bommer Canyon, I counted dozens of the signs. Like graffiti, these signs marred the otherwise beautiful scenery.

Whether one agrees with the council's decision to pursue the Great Park audit, we don't need

more signs littering our public spaces.

The editorial pages, the Internet and public meetings are places to carry on the conversation about the Great Park audit. Leave our open spaces the way they were intended.

Bruce Gary
Irvine

DATA DON'T BACK 'SETTLED SCIENCE'

Excellent column by Stephen Moore exposing the ridiculous claims by climate alarmists that climate science is "settled" ["Myth of 'settled science,'" Opinion, March 15].

Real-world data screams that climate science is not settled.

The "global warming" label was first used by climate alarmists, then magically transformed to "climate change" after the ongoing global temperature hiatus commenced in 1998. The transformation between these two terms by climate alarmists demonstrates that political ideology is driving the portrayal of climate science.

Some alarmists have tried to deny that the global warming temperature hiatus is happening. But the most recent United Nations climate science report specifically acknowledges and discusses this hiatus.

Despite the fact that the observed and measured empirical

global temperature data clearly reveal that climate models grossly exaggerate and overstate the impact of global temperatures as a function of atmospheric CO2 levels, scientists use these inadequate models, anyway, to try and justify their claims of doom-and-gloom climate impacts caused by rising CO2 levels.

In a letter of protest to NASA's administrator by 49 former astronauts, including a number of scientists and engineers demanded that NASA look at empirical data that does not support climate alarmists claims instead of relying on highly questionable computer models.

The scientifically legitimate challenge to the adequacy of climate science is not driven, as some climate alarmists claim, by the "moon landing never happened" kooks or the failure to communicate the issues to the public or any other excuse.

This challenge is driven by the failure of the climate alarmist community and media to address the massive volume of measured empirical data that does not support the alarmist claims, which are almost always based on inadequate and speculative climate model projections.

Science is not decided by consensus, by authority, by computer models nor by alarmist conjecture and speculation. In the

final analysis, science is decided through the use of reliably measured empirical data.

Larry Hamlin
Dana Point

BLAMING MESSENGER ON CLIMATE CHANGE

There's plenty of attempts, funded by fossil-fuel companies via their think-tank hired guns, to cast doubt on mounting scientific evidence of human-caused global warming. But people still see the climate becoming very abnormal. Many understand the scientific observations that the accumulation of greenhouse gases from fossil-fuel combustion is causing great damage.

Now, these think tanks attack climate-change messengers, saying they want to destroy the market system.

Not true. Many responsible people want to use market forces to convert our dirty-energy economy to a clean-energy economy. Meaning, we can use a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividends as a market solution.

Even if some don't think the buildup of CO2 is happening right now, the various poisons released into the air, water, land and on people who want healthy lives is reason enough to convert to clean energy. Fossil-fuel-funded think tanks don't like that.

John Castillo
Orange

TOM MEYER / SYNDICATED CARTOONIST



“I know no class of my fellowmen, however just, enlightened and humane, which can be wisely and safely trusted absolutely with the liberties of any other class.”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

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