

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Got your flu shot?

Thinking about getting a flu shot? If not, we and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge you to do so.

In an effort to put Ebola in perspective, the CDC notes more Americans will die this winter from the flu, or influenza, than Ebola.

So, if you're concerned about Ebola, why not take a good step toward ending the respiratory virus known as the flu that poses even greater risk than Ebola in America?

It appears much is being done to keep Ebola from posing the health risks in American it does in Africa. Gov. Mark Dayton reviewed the state's preparedness measures with top officials in October. He has asked the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to join five others getting special federal medical screening.

In addition, state health officials have said they are confident they could contain an outbreak in Minnesota.

We're not trying downplay the killer Ebola virus. It is serious and precautions must be made to handle people traveling into the United States from countries in which the Ebola virus has spread.

But unlike the seasonal flu viruses, the current Ebola virus cannot spread through the air. Instead, it is transmitted by physical contact with the saliva, blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person.

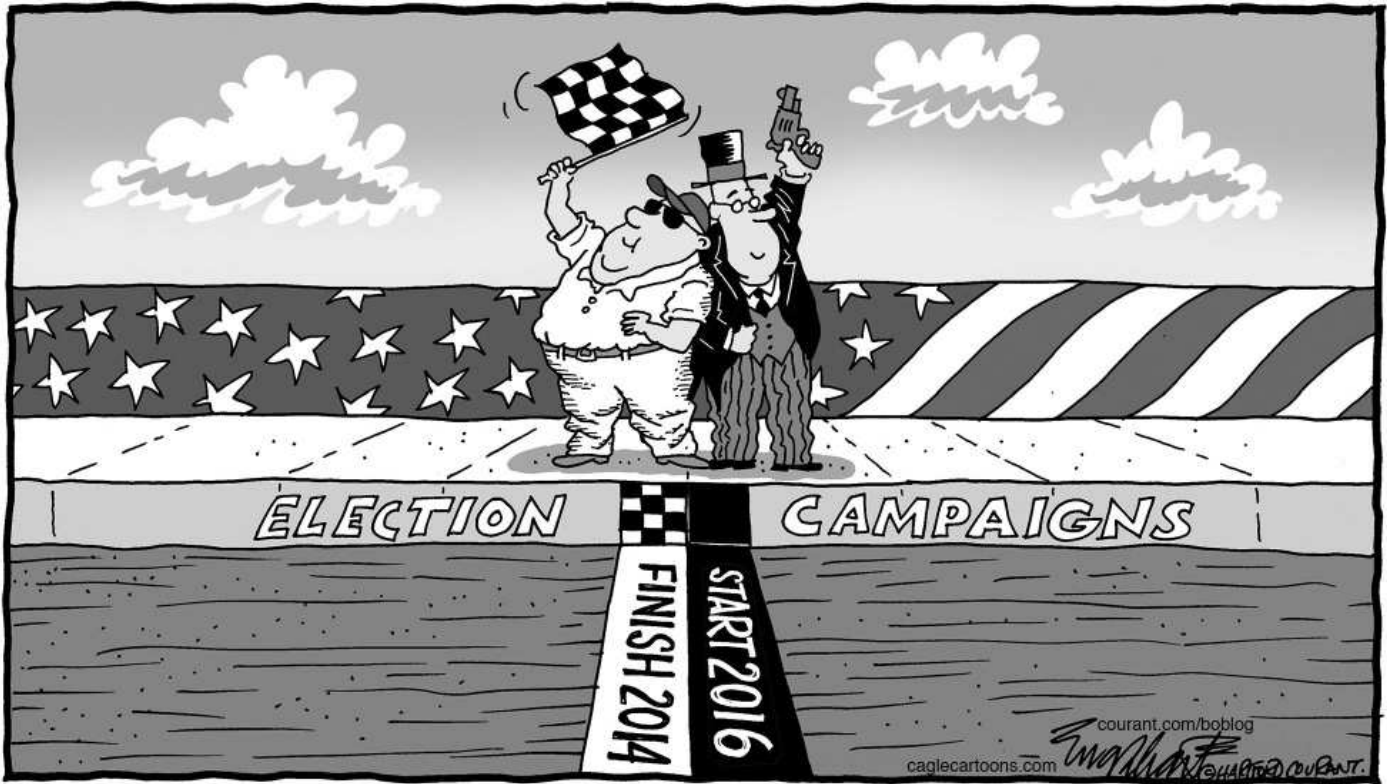
Fever and other prominent symptoms typically appear before a patient becomes contagious, giving hospitals and clinics a chance to identify Ebola cases early and isolate the patients and anyone who has had close contact with them.

The CDC has noted Ebola and the flu have similar symptoms. Should fewer people show up at hospitals across the nation with flu-like symptoms, it may be easier to identify someone who could potentially have Ebola.

The more people who get the flu vaccination, the fewer people will get it. Sure, about 60 percent of the people who get the flu vaccination will still get the flu, but that's better than nothing.

Even if Ebola weren't in the picture, we like the idea of fewer children, elderly and co-workers getting and possibly spreading the flu.

Now is the time to consider getting the flu vaccine, if not for yourself, for others.



GUEST COLUMN

The turning point in Canada's terrorism

TORONTO, Canada — The live TV coverage on CBCNN brought back memories of another assassination — the assassination of JFK. A funeral procession punctuated by drumbeats and bagpipes. Only this time, a country's grief focused on Corporal Nathan Cirillo. Only this time, the haunting image of a child that'll be reproduced forever was Carrillo's 5-year-old son Marcus, bravely walking in the parade, his life changed forever.

Just as Canada's course has changed forever.

When Michael Zehalf-Bibeau killed the unarmed 24-year-old Cirillo standing guard at the National War Memorial, and then stormed Parliament Hill, it was in what police conclude was an "ideological and political" act — the second of two sucker punches from radical Islam. Two days earlier, a sympathizer of the terrorist group ISIS ran over and killed Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent in the province of Quebec.

Pundits in Toronto's superb local newspapers and on airwaves talk of a "loss of innocence" for the 147-year-old country, a claim that's as inaccurate as saying 9/11 was a "loss of innocence" for the U.S., or that the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks that took 164 lives was a



Joe GANDELMAN
INDEPENDENT'S EYE

"loss of innocence" for India. But was it an event that will set in motion transformations? Yes.

The Globe and Mail columnist Lawrence Martin notes that the twin murders' timing will strengthen Prime Minister Stephen Harper: "It may be short in duration, but patriotism is overflowing in this land right now," he writes. "In times like these, people want a strong man. Security becomes a top-drawer issue. It all plays perfectly to the politics of Mr. Harper, who is being lauded for his handling of this crisis."

He points out that it seemed like only yesterday when Harper's decision to have Canada join the air battle against ISIS, and his warnings that Canada was a terrorist target, were being ignored or pooh-poohed.

Meanwhile, Canadian ambassador to the United States Gary Doer has been

trying to put out a media firestorm in his assigned country. Pundits on Fox News and other ideologues are vastly inflating the number of Canadians fighting with ISIS to bolster their claims that Canada is a bee's nest of Muslim terrorism and a danger to the U.S. They inaccurately suggest the two killers of Cirillo and Vincent could have easily crossed into the United States.

"But neither had a passport. What part of that don't you get?" Doer told The National Post. "Part of my job is to say 'You shouldn't be pointing fingers: you should be looking in the mirror if you have a problem.'"

Good luck, with that, Mr. Ambassador. If America is the land of the free, it's also now the home of predictable and tiresomely trite political ideologues. For instance, in a blog post, Republican Mike Huckabee simply couldn't control himself, and had to point at Parliament sergeant-at-arms Kevin Vikers' shooting of Zehalf-Bibeau to slam gun control.

"So if you're keeping score, once again: a would-be mass murderer who might have wiped out half the Canadian government was not stopped by sharpened flagpoles. He was stopped by a good guy with a gun," Huckabee the Hack wrote.

The Conservative government here is now looking into ways to handle and contain its citizens who back, support or join terrorist groups. It will likely seek additions to the pending "Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act," which would be the first major national security revision since 1984. Today, citizens of the United States' biggest customer are having a conversation about checks and balances while considering giving police broader powers.

"The strongest counterattack we can make upon the Islamic State...will be to make certain that the Canada of yesterday will continue unchanged, for, if necessary, the next several decades," Toronto Star columnist Richard Gwyn wrote. "It's as considerable a challenge as we've ever faced. If we do it right, we'll be leading the world."

Canada's nickname is "True North Strong and Free." It'll be struggling to keep that nickname as it moves further into what promises to be a brutal, ultra-violent, terrorism-plagued 21st century — as it responds to its wake-up call.

Gandelman's columns are distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

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St. Cloud Times, Oct. 30