

Muscatatuck & the education of Rep. Banks

Freshman Republican's 'arsenal tour' brings him to the urban warfare center

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

MUSCATATUCK – It was once haven or hell for the Hoosier feeble-minded. It was once destined to revert from aging infrastructure to farmland. It would have been inhabited by deer, coyotes and red fox. But these days, you're more likely to find the 82nd Airborne Division or U.S. Special Forces drilling along the "urban canyon" or Indiana's "Afghan village," complete with camels. "It's like walking into a time warp," said Maj. Gen. Courtney P. Carr to U.S. Rep. Jim Banks.

Earlier this month, Carr, the adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard, gave the freshman Republican and former Afghan war veteran a tour of the Muscatatuck Urban Warfare Center. It was part of Banks' weeklong tour of Indiana military installa-



Rep. Jim Banks framed by a shattered windshield at the Muscatatuck Urban Warfare Center. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

tions and defense sector corporations. To someone like Gen. Carr, a rising star heading the nation's fourth largest

Continued on page 3

Hurricanes and history

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – One of my favorite expressions is that while history may not repeat itself, often it rhymes.

Hurricane Harvey is not Hurricane Katrina. The scale of costly damage may, however, exceed it. Depending upon where hurricanes come ashore, and obviously the category level based upon wind, the impacts vary wildly. Also, as any watcher of weather knows, generally the warnings far exceed the actual impacts. Generally,

For most of my life, not to seem unsympathetic, my interest in hurricanes was mostly related to Notre Dame pummeling the University of Miami.



“We have many military options, and the president wanted to be briefed on each one of them. Any threat to the United States or its territories, including Guam, or our allies, will be met with massive military response.”

- Defense Sec. Jim Mattis



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U.S. Rep. Mark Souder during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Where I grew up we worried about tornados and rivers flooding, and if we were going to get a snow day.

Water in northeast Indiana provides us with some of America's best soil for agriculture and most of the natural lakes of Indiana. Some rivers run to Lake Erie, some to Lake Michigan, and the Wabash River system heads to the Mississippi River and out to sea at New Orleans. Different Army Corps of Engineers divisions work with our region, and, if you are in office for 16 years, you learn to know them all.

After 9/11, New Orleans also came of particular interest because of potential terrorism, both because of its importance to the oil/petrochemical interests and because of its port, the gateway to the entire Mississippi River Valley.

I was also the co-founder of the National Parks Caucus and an active advocate for our national parks. While in New Orleans, pre-Katrina, meeting with a variety of Homeland Security people (e.g. Coast Guard, ICE) and visiting some of the vulnerable areas on the outer river areas, I also met with the park staff about the erosion issues that were making New Orleans more vulnerable.

It is not that the weather forecasters were inaccurate in their Katrina forecasts. There were also warnings about levee weakness. It was obvious to those who purchased beignets at Café du Monde that you had to take steps up to see the Mississippi River. Even the fact that corruption existed in Louisiana was no shock to anyone who read beyond superfi-

cial American history. Nevertheless, when Hurricane Katrina hit and then the levee system failed, we were not prepared.

My roles were dual; I was a member of the FEMA subcommittee of Homeland Security and a senior member of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, the two primary committees of jurisdiction.

My first lesson, however, was nearly immediate. Keith Busse, then president of Steel Dynamics, called demanding that the federal government intervene to get a particular needed product without which steel could not be produced. Two of the three providers were down. If we didn't act fast, the steel industry would be also be down within days, and the auto industry would soon follow. Flooding in New Orleans was a serious threat to the people I represented in Congress, so I obviously immediately did what I could.

The most prolonged battle related to the temporary housing issue, and the exaggerated and mostly fabricated charges against the companies that provided temporary housing. The overwhelming percentage of the RV industry is in Elkhart County, upwards from 80%. When tens of thousands of people are homeless, you can't store them in convention centers, or even Lakewood Church, very long.

On the other hand, even if you purchase the entire range of trailer units from lots in a large region, it is not enough for a disaster in a city the size of New Orleans. (You can start to see the rhyming history com-

ing for Houston.) They had to build thousands of units, fast.

Small units were mostly placed by residents on their property as they attempted to reconstruct their homes. They used them as homes for months, which is not a purpose for which they were intended. People closed the windows, which in some cases caused effects not dissimilar to a more potent “new car” smell, making them nauseous or potentially exaggerating pre-existing conditions. A few lawyers opportunistically sued, but the issue, unsurprisingly, dissipated as the media moved on to other things. But here we are again, with likely a bigger housing disaster.

Over the next few years, in several visits, I walked on levees and in neighborhoods, met with schools and community leaders about short-term needs, and learned some of the challenges of reconstructing a city. Which comes first when only a few homes can be salvaged and most of the people are gone? Do families come back if there are no gas stations, schools, doctors, grocery stores or pharmacies? Neighborhoods grow organically. Just dropping them in is hard. Chicken/egg arguments are theoretically interesting, but not so much in trying to rebuild a city.

The best thing so far about Houston is a clear illustration of how government can, in fact, learn some lessons from previous disasters. FEMA at the time of Katrina had little power. It was a “coordinator.” It had to beg each

agency for assistance. Local government first, then states, had the primary responsibility. In Louisiana that miserably failed. When I visited with the first House/Senate group into New Orleans, I believe it was Sen. Joe Biden who erupted at the Democrat mayor and governor when, at a private meeting, they started arguing about blame in front of all of us, instead of solutions.

FEMA was given more power, and we set up regional supply centers that could be moved rapidly into hard-hit areas. Hurricane Harvey strained that system, but at least there was a larger, coordinated federal immediate response because of legislative changes. The politicians learned to act in advance and stay involved. How the National Guard moved to assist was vastly improved. In 2005, as convoys moved through areas, local communities were drained of gas. Now things are better pre-planned. Coast Guard and other air resources were there faster.

As is always the case in massive disasters, the volunteers, religious groups and other charities will always – always – be the backbone of immediate relief. The government alone cannot do it. But this time, so far, at least the federal government has learned some lessons.

With one caveat. This may be the largest housing disaster we’ve ever faced. What have we learned from Katrina in that area? ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

Banks, from page 1

National Guard contingent, Rep. Banks is a value-added target. He followed U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski to the House Armed Services Committee after she ascended to Ways and Means. For Banks, the tour was an initial crash course on what he expects to be a decades-long mission.

“I’m trying to learn about Indiana and fully utilize the position that I have as a freshman congressman on the committee today, and perhaps in a decade from now I’ll be much more of a tenured leader on Armed Services and do much more to rebuild the defense industry in our state,” said Banks.

He’s been an



Maj. Gen. Courtney Carr surveys Muscatatuck with Rep. Banks from a Blackhawk helicopter. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

ambitious Republican, moving from president of the Indiana University Republicans to chairing the Whitley County GOP and then to the Indiana Senate in 2010. At times, Banks seemed restless and potentially reckless, as early in his Indiana Senate tenure he seemed to foment leadership

change. By the time he ran for Congress, Senate President Pro Tempore David Long was an early and emphatic backer. His national opening came in 2016 when U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman opted for the U.S. Senate race, and Banks won a six-person primary, edging out farmer Kip Tom and State Sen. Liz Brown with 34%. From the start, his campaign had been well-funded and organized. He had

systemically checked off the boxes for optimum position.

Entering Congress, many thought Banks would follow Stutzman's footsteps into the Tea Party Freedom Caucus. Instead, Banks has insisted that his priority membership is the Republican conference. While he has gained conspicuous national media early in his career, with the seasoned help of his chief of staff, Matt Lahr, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, Banks comes off as thoughtful and less a firebrand than many had forecast. Banks is in study mode these days.

Those who knew him along the way, like Evansville's Joshua Claybourn, have long viewed Banks as a rising star, perhaps a future governor.

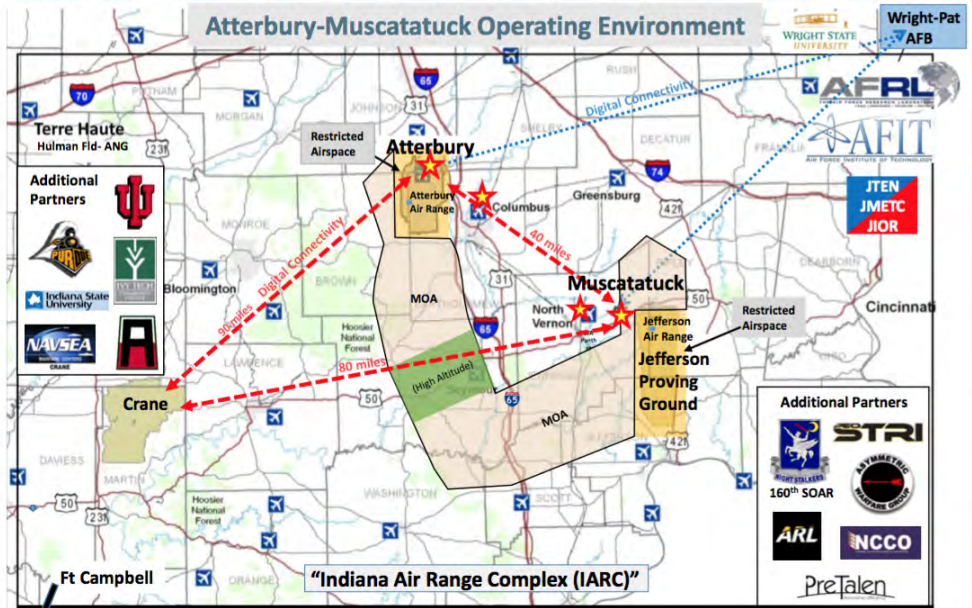
In the midst of his political career, Banks enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve as a supply corps officer in 2012 and took a leave of absence from the Indiana Senate in 2014 and 2015 to deploy to Afghanistan during operations Enduring Freedom and Freedom's Sentinel.

For someone like Gen. Carr, Banks is a fortuitous asset. Muscatatuck was built in the 1920s as an asylum for the mentally challenged and afflicted. By 2004, Gov. Joe Kernan was poised not only to decommission the state facility, but, as Carr explained, "plow it back into farmland."

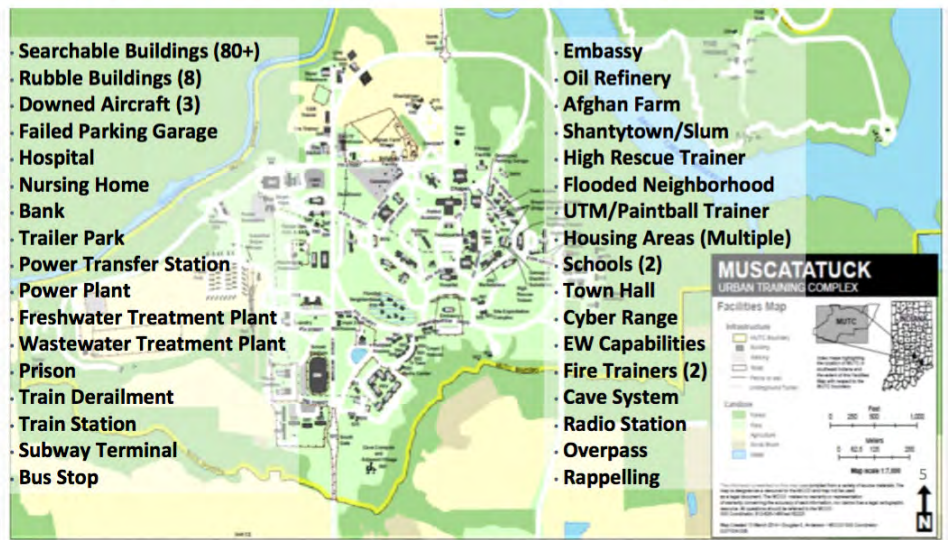
Carr's predecessor, former Adjutant General Martin Umbarger, had a better idea: Turn Muscatatuck into the first U.S. urban warfare training center. It had a plethora of brick and mortar assets, from a hospital to a school, a prison, a reservoir, power and water plants, a town hall, radio station and an oil depository. "It's got everything a city would have," Carr told Banks as we left Camp Atterbury in a Blackhawk helicopter on a 20-minute lift to Muscatatuck. "This is a city with real infrastructure."

When Gov. Mitch Daniels took office in 2005, he immediately got the concept. Daniels, Umbarger and Carr found powerful allies like Gen. David Petraeus, who in 2005 was camped at Fort Leavenworth, plotting new Iraq War strategies after the 2003 invasion unraveled into a full-blown insurgency. As Petraeus formulated what we would know as the Iraq "surge," there was a need for what

URBAN TRAINING CENTER MUSCATATUCK



MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE / VENUES



Carr and Lt. Col. John Pitt called "immersive training." U.S. Special Forces and units like the 82nd and 101st Airborne units needed real-life environments to practice urban combat and control techniques.

"Can you do it?" Carr quoted Petraeus. To which Carr related the response: "We always say 'yes' and then we figure out how to do it." What has evolved over the past dozen years is what Carr calls "globally unique customer training."

"This is completely unique," Carr continues. "It presents challenges at the battlefield level. That's what this place offers. The 101st (Airborne) actually did a rehearsal here." Want to practice an embassy evacuation? Come to Muscatatuck. Want to search and clear an Afghan slum?

The Hoosier hovels await.

"If you want a city in distress, we can do that," said Pitt. "If you want to do a neighborhood search and clear, we can do that. We can do explosive breaches. A low yield explosive application creates the fatal funnel." They can do simulated sniper fire. Or live sniper fire.

If a unit needs to practice a Baghdad market deployment, the center will bring in 20 to 30 human "role players," a bunch of goats, and Pitt explains, "It's like an Afghan market. With the music, it's pretty immersive."

In addition to all the traditional city infrastructure, there is now the "urban canyon" complete with natural gas-fed fire plumes, an Afghan slum, a Baghdad-style market place (though some of the signage is in Russian), a flooded neighborhood, a train derailment, a trailer park, a failed parking garage, along with rubble "searchable" buildings. One, with the help of Israeli military engineers, allows units to lift a collapsed building with kevlar inflation devices. There's a cyber center where the FBI has trained, its hackers actually taking over the water plant, diverting fluids unbeknownst to the plant's superintendent.

There's even a subway system complete with Chicago Transit Authority cars, a favorite asset for Carr, a southside Chicago native who used the opportunity to profess his love for the Cubs. "Or the White Sox," the writer mentioned. Carr seized the opportunity, "That makes sense. There's nobody here!"

Carr stresses that Atterbury should be seen as one installation in two sectors. And it can be integrated with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton and Fort Campbell and Fort Knox in Kentucky for either simulated or actual convoys.

Banks has questions. Where does the funding come from? The Department of Defense and the Army put in \$6 million annually, and Indiana puts in \$2 million. It is



Rep. Banks reviews the "flooded neighborhood," the Afghan slum and meets Sahara the camel, who doesn't spit because she doesn't socialize with other camels. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

staffed by 60 to 75 state employees, some working at the former town hall now labeled the "U.S. Embassy," along with utility personnel and even a couple farmers who tend to Sahara the camel, some alpacas, llamas and goats. The animals are important because K-9 units can become accustomed to their scents.

"You know you can rent a camel," Carr says as Banks meets Sahara. "But it's pretty pricey, so we bought our own."

Banks is not the first member of Congress to visit Muscatatuck. Carr once gave U.S. Rep. Andre Carson "a ground walk" only to be greeted by an explosion. "Those suckers didn't tell us about an IED," Carr explained. "Both of us were about eating gravel."

Banks asked, "Has Andre been back?" Carr responded, "He has not."

Banks' takeaways

In the freshman Republican, Gen. Carr has found an emerging ally with the potential for expanding clout. "Muscatatuck is more significant than I realized before," Banks said after we returned to Atterbury. "I had never visited, but

I've read about it and heard about it for years. The training opportunities are much more substantial than I knew before.

"One takeaway for me is to be an advocate of that on Capitol Hill and sell that to the Army and Department of Defense as a training site that should be used more and funded more and increase the capacity of what they can do," Banks continued. "The bigger picture for me, I'm new to Congress, I'm new to the Armed Services Committee and I plan to stay there for my entire career. I'm not looking to move to another committee. It's my passion and interest to be a part of that, the larger na-

tional security debate.”

His Muscatatuck venture was part of his “Arsenal of Democracy” tour that also brought him to Grissom Air Reserve Base, Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center and the Indiana Office of Defense Development. On the corporate defense sector, Banks has visited Raytheon, BAE Systems in Fort Wayne, Harris Corp. in Fort Wayne, AM General in Mishawaka, Rolls-Royce in Indianapolis.

He worked extensively on the National Defense Authorization Act and can tick off “wins for Indiana”:

- \$351 million for combat vehicle improvement that includes an \$8 million increase for Allison Transmission specifically for an Abrams tank recovery vehicle;

- \$87.79 million for ambulances made by AM General;

- \$1.79 billion for the F/A18 E/F for Boeing and Rolls-Royce jet engines;

- \$132 million for Cummins generators;

- \$1.09 billion for Abrams tanks that will benefit General Dynamics;

- \$74 million for jet engine upgrades;

- \$624 million for the next generation jammer program for Raytheon;

- \$10 million for infrared image weather systems for Harris;

- \$1.9 million for military construction funding for the 122nd wing at Fort Wayne International Airport;

- \$129.6 million for research and development of aerospace vehicle technologies for Purdue University.

Sequestration hammers Indiana

For the past seven years, sequestration following the 2010 government shutdown has hammered Indiana’s defense sector with more than a 20% decline in contracts. “It’s been devastating,” Banks explained. “To put it in perspective, we’ve seen military spending cut since 2010 when it went into effect, we’ve seen significant cuts in Indiana. When you budget by continuing resolutions and



take away the ability of military and industry to anticipate the future because you don’t have a constructive budgeting process that allows you to participate, it wreaks havoc on the military and industry at the same time. We’ve seen the diminishment of jobs in the defense industry because of sequestration.”

On the horizon, Banks is concerned about another round of base closures (BRAC), that took Grissom AFB to reserve status in the mid-1980s. This is where the 122nd in Fort Wayne or Crane’s futures could be decided. “I’m not saying we should never go to another round of BRAC, but this is not the time to do it. We’re seeking to rebuild and get the military back on its feet. Congress has led the way; while President Trump and his administration and his budget only advocated for a nominal increase of

defense spending, the Congress has advocated for a much more significant boost, up to 10% increase of what we saw in the last Obama budget for fiscal year 2018. That’s what I’ve advocated for, that’s what the Armed Services Committee has advocated for, with a new NDAA that we passed six weeks ago.”

Government shutdown threats

As for President Trump’s threats of another government shutdown, perhaps tamped down in September due to the devastation in Texas by Hurricane Harvey this past week, Banks was not amused. “The discussions about the shutdown are reckless and completely avoidable,” Banks said. “I was greatly disappointed in the president’s tweets this morning and I’ve expressed that on my own twitter account, that tying the debt ceiling debate to the debt ceiling issue is not draining the swamp. It’s quite the opposite. This business as usual is the type of thing the American people want us to move away from. Instead we should be tying the debt limit to what it should be tied to, which is addressing spending reforms that would address a \$20 trillion national debt. That is a reckless discussion

that is not productive. A government shutdown is avoidable and I think Congress will do everything that it can.”

Banks added, “In my short tenure in Congress and working with Speaker Ryan, I can’t imagine Speaker Ryan will allow a government shutdown to occur.”

The continuing education of Rep. Banks

The military education for Rep. Banks will be a continuing process. He is cultivating allies in the likes of Gen. Carr. He has also reached out to former Sen. Richard Lugar and is preparing to author Nunn-Lugar 2.0 legislation to reprioritize its mission. It comes at a time when some in Congress see that threat reduction program as a post-Cold War relic.

It all comes with the “fire and fury” war drums beating with regard to North Korea. President Trump suggested this week that “talking is not the answer!”

“You can make the case that the president’s actions in recent weeks have backed Kim Jong Un off, but I don’t think I can get comfortable with that,” Banks said. “What we do know, both classified and unclassified, is how much danger we face in North Korea.



Rep. Banks at the cyber center at Muscatatuck. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

“That’s why this conversation; while we hope to avoid that scenario, our troops have to be ready tonight,” Banks said, reemphasizing the importance of his tour. “That readiness crisis which we talked about today, we address every day on Capitol Hill. Right now two-thirds of the Army’s brigades cannot deploy because of lack of training and equipment.”

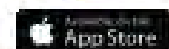
So there is much to do, much to learn, more urban drills to conduct and much to educate with freshman Rep. Banks. ❖

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As war drums beat, channeling Andy

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – President Trump has promised “fire and fury” for his North Korean counterpart, the dictator Kim Jong Un. Last week, Trump tweeted, “Talking is not the answer.”



On Sunday, Defense Sec. Jim Mattis, standing with

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford on the White House driveway after meeting with President Trump and Vice President Pence, reacted to the North Korean detonation of a hydrogen bomb that measured 6.3 on the USGS Richter scale and just weeks after it lobbed a missile over Japan. “We have many military options, and the president wanted to be briefed on each one of them,” said

Mattis. “Any threat to the United States or its territories, including Guam, or our allies, will be met with a massive military response – a response both effective and overwhelming.”

The war drums are now fully beating. Perhaps it's time to channel our inner Andy. By this, I mean the late U.S. Rep. Andrew Jacobs Jr., author of the non-best-selling book “The 1600 Killers,” describing the war actions of the 20th Century's last dozen presidents.

Jacobs has a relevant historical viewpoint. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps because he believed the snazzy dress uniforms would attract the chicks. In 1950, he ended up on the front lines of what we call the Korean War, a conflict that officially never ended and, today, stands for an epic revival.

His perspective, that it's Congress that has the authority to declare war and not the president, came from a man who once found himself hauling off wounded Marines in Korea, and in a classic fog-of-war moment, staring down the guns of Chinese infantry, who inexplicably allowed him to live.

As Jacobs described the account of “Jim,” ... “The men with the stretcher were confused for a moment and then quickly got the point. It was a Chinese bazooka team who were pointing their rocket launcher at the misplaced Marines in the paddy. As he said his final prayers and cringed, he looked back toward his executioners and stared in amazement. The Chinese leader was signaling to the Marines to go on, obviously because they were carrying a wounded man. The Marines waved a bewildered wave of gratitude as they rushed from the paddy up a



draw in the adjacent woods.”

In making his case for Congress, Jacobs explained, “Most of our presidents have gotten away with the assertion that Article 2, Section 2, Clause 1 gives the president and not the Congress the authority to make an apocalyptic decision. That clause reads ‘the president shall be the commander in chief.’ To argue that the naked term ‘commander in chief’ supplants the specific and unambiguous language conferring the war-making authority on Congress is as far-fetched as to argue that the term ‘chief of police’ confers on that official the authority to enact criminal law.”

Jacobs related an 1848 letter from U.S. Rep. Abraham Lincoln to his law partner, William Herndon, where he wrote, “Allow the president to invade a neighboring nation whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion and you allow him to do so, whenever he may choose to say he deems it necessary for such purpose. And you allow him to make war at pleasure. Study to see if you can fix any limit to his power in this respect.”

The chilling phrase “apocalyptic decision” is operative here because it comes at a time when Trump and Kim are in a mano-y-mano showdown, their rhetoric boxing them into deadly corners. From former White House advisor Steve Bannon, we get a perspective of a potential catastrophe. “Forget it,” he told American Prospect magazine in an Aug. 16 interview. “Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that 10 million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about, there's no military solution here, they got us.”

Sec. Mattis calls such a potential conflict in terms ranging from “horrific” and “catastrophic.”

We also have had refresher courses on the chain of command for launching nukes, which a full blown conflict with North Korea will probably entail. Vox notes: Seoul is likely to be North Korea's first target should war break out with the U.S., and because Kim Jong Un has around 21,500 pieces of artillery lined up on the border between the North and South ready to fire, military analysts estimate that 100,000 people in Seoul would die in the first few days of conflict.

Trump has been quoted on the potential use of nukes nine times in recent years. Pressed by CBS “Face the Nation” host John Dickerson, who asked, “The United States has not used nuclear weapons since 1945. When should it?” Trump responded, “Well, it is an absolute last stance. And, you know, I use the word unpredictable. You want to be unpredictable. And somebody recently said – I made a great business deal. And the person on the other side was interviewed by a newspaper. And how did Trump do this? And they said, he's so unpredictable. And I didn't know if he meant it positively or negative. It turned out he meant it positively.”

Pressed by conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt on CNN on Dec. 15, 2015, Trump didn't grasp the

notion of triad, adding, "The biggest problem we have is nuclear – nuclear proliferation and having some maniac, having some madman go out and get a nuclear weapon. That's in my opinion, that is the single biggest problem that our country faces right now."

Hewitt pressed, "Of the three legs of the triad, though, do you have a priority?" Trump responded, "I think – I think, for me, nuclear is just the power, the devastation is very important to me."

Some believe this is a revival of his 2016 campaign mode, when pundits and partisans debated whether Trump was batshit crazy, or crazy like a fox. The hope is that Trump's big stick bluster will cower Kim. It is a risky bet will potentially millions of lives at stake.

"There's no veto once the president has ordered a strike," Franklin C. Miller, a nuclear specialist who held White House and Defense Department posts for 31 years, told the New York Times. "The president and only the president has the authority to order the use of nuclear weapons."

MSNBC's Joe Scarborough pressed former CIA and National Security Agency Director Michael Hayden about whether there were any ways to stop Trump from ordering a nuclear strike if he were elected president. "The system is designed for speed and decisiveness," Hayden replied. "It's not designed to debate the decision."

In a one-page Chapter 12, "Mad Math," Jacobs writes, "The apocalyptic prophecy is more likely to be validated when those we suppose to be educated and intelligent declare that war is a reasonable means by which to 'achieve clearly definable aims.'"

He asks, "Have you ever seen two grown men in a bare-knuckle fist fight on a sidewalk?" If so, he says, your reaction would be shock? Disgust? Insecurity? "Probably all three. Yet, multiply those two men by tens of thousands and intensify the violence by tons of dynamite, steel and gunpowder with the resultant quantum

of blood, viscera, stonecold rigor mortis and corresponding broken hearts back home, and frail wise men such as writer George Will will vicariously celebrate this madness of war, itself, as 'a profession.' Go figure."

Over the weekend, Trump chided South Korea, accusing the nation that could lose hundreds of thousands if not millions of its citizens of "appeasement." It was a bizarre coda to this ramp-up to war. Normally allies close ranks as crisis nears. President Trump is talking about corresponding trade wars and goading frontline allies to fall in line.

The world has a problem with North Korea. A huge problem. That dawning reality as the Washington Post described on Labor Day, led Yukiya Amano, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to describe North Korea as "a global threat." Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said during an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council that the North Korean regime was "begging for war. We have kicked the can down the road long enough. There is no more road left."

In 1990, Historic Landmarks of Indiana asked Jacobs to write a time capsule message to be opened in 2090. He wrote, "In terms of civilization, universal education and peaceful resolution of conflicts, the scant progress in this century has been a disappointment to those who long for the ancient vision of living in 'peace as good neighbors.' The deadly conspirator of this social failure has been the rapidly expanding capacity to invent and produce the machines of universal terror. As politicians compete for vicarious military heroism, the world teeters between war and peace."

So here we are, or as Kurt Vonnegut would posit, "And so it goes." In the age of shock and awe, which last went awry between 2003 and 2007 in Iraq, we appear to be on the brink on the Korean peninsula where war never really ended, where both sides are dug in and possessing nukes as a vestige of manhood. ❖

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Rokita, Messer in war by press sequence

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Since Todd Rokita entered Congress in 2011, a noted trait of his operations was the staff revolving door. Chiefs of staff and communications directors, two of the more conspicuous posts in a congressional office, had a number of changes.

In the context of the U.S. Senate race Rep. Rokita entered last month, the long-spectulated story was on his staffing challenges. That became a reality late last week when the Associated Press's Brian Slodysko penned this lead: "Staffers in tears. Pay cuts for small mistakes. Aides who walked out of the office – and never came back. Working for four-term Republican Rep. Todd Rokita of Indiana is an exacting job with long hours, made more difficult by a boss known for micromanaging and yelling at his staff, according to 10 former aides who spoke to The Associated Press. All but one of the former staffers spoke on the condition of anonymity out of concern of retribution from the congressman."

At least two staffers were fired after they said they intended to quit, according to three people with direct knowledge of the firings. Rokita also docked the pay of at least two congressional aides for mistakes, like a minor error in a news release, according to three former aides with knowledge of the actions. Another two staffers simply walked out on the job, according to four former aides.

The one staffer to go on the record, constituent service representative Tony Will, added a couple of gems to the story. "Todd's a hard boss to work for. He's got some staff turnover issues, but he is a very hard worker." Will said he learned a lot and developed a good rapport with his boss. There were times, however, when he wished "Todd would just take a nap."



Staffers in tears. Pay cuts for small mistakes. Aides who

"It's unfortunate that anonymous, disgruntled ex-staffers are making exaggerated claims that only tell half the story," said Rokita spokesman Tim Edson, who described his boss as honest and blunt.

The AP story followed a Politico story late last month that portrayed Rokita as a high-maintenance boss for staffers, drawing from an eight-page memo detailing what was expected of the congressman's drivers. None of this comes as a surprise to reporters and Republican operatives, who had either noticed or heard talk in Republican circles, including some of his Capitol Hill colleagues, over the years.

The real trend here is a continuation of the 2016 U.S. Senate campaign, when a number of unflattering stories about then-U.S. Reps. Todd Young and Marlin Stutzman were published. Often the topics were shopped around by campaign officials. The AP's Slodysko became the go-to reporter to take the tips and turn them into headlines.

Young had a near-miss on ballot signature access and there were stories about Stutzman's family vacations to California on the campaign dime. The third candidate, now Gov. Eric Holcomb, did not find himself a target due to the perception that he was widely seen as the likely third-place candidate.

Both the Rokita and the campaign of U.S. Rep. Luke Messer have pointed the finger after unflattering stories at each other. It began earlier this summer when the AP reported the six-figure income Messer's wife Jennifer made as a part-time attorney for the city of Fishers. There has been reporting on Messer's residency, and his decision to move the family to Washington. It was only a matter of time before there would be retaliation, manifested by the Rokita staffing memo and the staff turnover.

There was a story about more than \$200,000 that Attorney General Curtis Hill was spending on his office renovation. Some saw that as another shot across the bow for a potential candidate. Several of the unflattering Rokita and Messer stories came prior to official entry. The story on Messer's wife was seen as an attempt by Rokita to keep Messer out of the race.

Don't expect this to let up. Any public official has some dirt and this is an intense battle for the Republican U.S. Senate nomination. The key question at this point is if Rokita and Messer keep targeting each other, will that provide a lane for Hill or perhaps State Rep. Mike Braun to exploit the negativity and win the nomination?

To that end, look no further than



U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita (top) and Luke Messer are in a war via press sequence. (HPI Photos by Brian A.

a Fox News poll last week that found just 15% of voters approve of the job Congress is doing, while about 74% disapprove (Blanton, Fox News). For comparison, Congress hit a low 9% approval in October 2013 following the government shutdown over the budget. Fox News noted: "Here's one example of why lawmakers get such low marks: 49% of voters feel it is important Congress pass tax reform legislation this year. At the same time, far fewer, 14%, think it's likely to get accomplished."

Hurt sites lack of name ID

Republican Senate candidate Mark Hurt said a lack of name recognition hinders his campaign (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald-Bulletin). "I really believe Luke (Messer) and Todd (Rokita) are already breaking the 11th commandment not to speak ill of a fellow Republican," he said. "If we let them beat each other up, that benefits Joe Donnelly and it really strengthens his hand." Hurt said he thinks social media will allow his campaign to get his message out at a lower cost than through television advertising. "We should be focusing on Donnelly's votes," he said. "Don't undercut people on non-issues like personalities."

HPI Republican primary Horse Race: Tossup

Donnelly will be a tax reform target

U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly will be targeted by Republicans and interest groups like the Koch Brothers on the coming tax reform legislation. Politico reported, "The White House is kicking off its push for tax reform with the intent of winning vulnerable moderate Democrats to the cause – by threatening punishment at the ballot box if they don't ultimately sign on. Sens. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), Donnelly (D-Ind.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), and Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.) will be targeted by Americans For Prosperity."

"For those that don't, we will absolutely be making that an issue in their state as people consider who their senator should be," said Levi Russell, director of public



affairs for AFP. Don't be surprised if Vice President Mike Pence returns to the state to pressure Donnelly. "We want tax reform, and we want you to work with us," is how a senior Pence aide described the message to Politico. "The people of West Virginia want tax reform." A Pence trip to Indiana to up the pressure on Donnelly is also under consideration, a Pence aide said.

Congress

3rd CD: Dems endorse Tritch

After a homeless man, Tommy Schrader, won the 3rd CD Democratic nomination in 2016 only to be trounced by U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, the Indiana Democratic Party State Central Committee stepped in and endorsed Courtney Tritch. "Courtney has the know-how and experience to jumpstart the Hoosier economy and attract and cultivate good-paying jobs to Indiana's 3rd Congressional District," state Democratic Party Chairman John Zody said. "The State Central Committee and Hoosier Democrats back candidates who are focused on building up Indiana communities, who fight for families, fairness and the future, and that's exactly the kind of leader Courtney Tritch is." The candidate from Fort Wayne owns a marketing consulting firm and is a former vice president of marketing for the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. Another gadfly candidate, David Roach, is also seeking the Democratic nomination.

General Assembly

Kenley replacement coming Wednesday

Hamilton County Republicans gather Wednesday to replace one of the most powerful members of the General Assembly (Berman, WIBC). Precinct leaders are caucusing to pick someone to fill the three years remaining in the term of longtime Senate Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley. They'll meet on Kenley's home turf in Noblesville, but the caucus pits both Noblesville against Carmel and Westfield, and insiders against outsiders. The candidates include three city or county council members, two current or former state government staffers, and two political newcomers. Kenley has endorsed Noblesville City Councilwoman Megan Wiles, but the field also includes Carmel Councilwoman Sue Finkam, Hamilton County Councilman Brad Beaver, engineering and construction business owner Mark Hall, Gordon Marketing training director Joe Morris, former Mike Pence policy adviser Dan Schmidt, and Victoria Spartz, the CFO for Attorney General Curtis Hill.

HD63: Lindauer announces

Shane M. Lindauer of Jasper announced his intention to run for the District 63 State House of Representatives seat in the 2018 Republican primary (Dubois County Herald). "It's something that's been on my mind for quite some time," Lindauer, 43, said last week. "With Braun moving on, now seemed like the perfect time for my family." State Rep. Mike Braun announced plans earlier this month to run for the U.S. Senate seat currently occupied by incumbent Democrat Joe Donnelly. Lindauer said he believes that "government was primarily instituted to protect life, liberty and property." ❖

25th amendment getting scrutiny

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Sen. Birch Bayh of Indiana, author of the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on presidential succession and disability, guided it to approval by Congress in 1965 and final ratification by the states two years later.

For some reason, the amendment is now in the news.



Bayh, then chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on constitution amendments, said the amendment was "necessary to provide a way to deal with two problems of presidential succession."

One was frequent vice-presidential vacancies. When President John Kennedy was assassinated and Lyndon Johnson became president in

1963, it brought the 16th time the office of vice president was unoccupied. The Constitution had not provided for a way to replace a vice president between elections.

Historians relate that the post had been left vacant 20 percent of the time as a result of one vice president resigning, seven dying in office and eight taking over for presidents who had died in office.

A presidential succession act had placed the speaker of the House and then the president pro tempore of the Senate next in succession after the vice president. Bayh argued that those officials often were not of the same party as the president and vice president selected by the voters and that they are not picked for their congressional posts with presidential qualifications in mind.

The 25th Amendment provides:

"Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress."

The amendment came quickly into play. In 1973, Gerald Ford became vice president through the 25th Amendment process after Spiro Agnew resigned as vice president. Then when Ford became president after the

resignation of President Nixon a year later, he nominated Nelson Rockefeller to fill the vice-presidential vacancy.

Bayh said in 1974 after those momentous events, "I don't think any of my congressional colleagues could have predicted that the amendment would first be used to pick a new vice president and that vice president would assume the presidency under such unusual and unfortunate circumstances."

The second problem Bayh sought to deal with was "the temporary incapacity of the president which arose most recently during President Eisenhower's term." Eisenhower, with heart problems, had an agreement with Nixon, his vice president, to serve as acting president at a time of "disability." But there had been no clear constitutionally prescribed way for a president to transfer authority or later to reclaim it or for determining how a president could be declared "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

For some reason, the amendment's wording on that now is getting great scrutiny.

The 25th Amendment allows a president to transfer power temporarily to the vice president if incapacitated, such as while undergoing surgery, and then reclaim the powers after recovery.

It also provides for a situation in which the vice president and a majority of the president's Cabinet declare the president "is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." The vice president then would become acting president. But the president, if disagreeing, could declare that "no inability exists" and reclaim the presidency - unless both houses of Congress decide by two-thirds votes that he is unable to do so.

The amendment says Congress could by law create some group other than the vice president and a Cabinet majority to determine inability to serve. Congress hasn't done that. But some Democratic congressional members are proposing creation of a commission to assess the president's ability to govern. It would be composed of 11 members, with at least eight doctors, four of whom would be psychiatrists. Right now, of course, it stands no chance of pas-



sage.

For some reason, it still gets more sponsors.

For some reason, what Sen. Birch Bayh authored a half century ago is today getting more and more attention.



Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.

Conflicted on war monument removal

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Against my better judgement, I have decided to weigh in on the subject of Confederate memorials. The existence of Confederate memorials have been the subject of much debate and consternation. Recently, in Charlottesville, Virginia, the issue came roaring from the



history books onto the front pages of America's newspapers. The issue has simmered for all of the 152 years since Robert E. Lee surrendered to U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House.

I must admit that I am personally deeply conflicted on the issue. There is something to be said for both sides of the monument debate. My great-great-uncle was held at Andersonville Prison and suffered the

horrors of that hell hole during 1864. I suppose that I have as good a reason as anyone else to totally reject anything at all to do with the Confederacy and what it did to so many millions of American citizens and slaves during four long years of war.

However, I am also a student of history and as any historian worth their salt knows, "history ain't pretty." No historical issue is ever truly cut and dried. Whereas I spent my childhood thinking that I wore a white hat when I fought as a Union soldier or as a GI battling evil Nazis, today in my relic collection I own a Nazi belt buckle with a Swastika inside a wreath with the words "Gott Mit Uns" written around the wreath. Even the lowly German storm-trooper felt that God was on his side. The dirty little secret of history is that history is written by the victors.

One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist. One man's patriot is another man's traitor. Let's be real about this! George Washington, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and their brothers in arms et al were all traitors to the English Crown and if Lord Cornwallis had been successful, the whole gang would have been hanged and we'd all be singing "God Save the Queen." We'd all be praying that little Prince George doesn't grow up with big ears like his granddaddy.

The amazing thing is that the Confederates whose memorials many people would now like to destroy are just the type of firebrands and freedom fighters that our founding fathers were. The only difference is that Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson and Nathan Bedford Forrest lost their war of independence. Oh sure, there might have been some differences in the issues that were fought over, but the principles were the same.

So, I humbly ask, should we deny that this great conflict of the Civil War never happened? Should we ignore the incredible sacrifices made by the people of the South, the honor and bravery of the individual sons, brothers and fathers who fought for its cause just because the cause was wrong then and is wrong today? How do you adequately honor the soldiers who were thought of so highly that Congress made them United States veterans by an Act of Congress? Is honoring the bravery and sacrifice of the Confederate soldier the same thing as honoring their attitude on slavery?

The last question is most difficult.

There is no doubt that some people today use the Confederacy, its flag and its trappings as veiled instruments of propagating racism. I have no question in my mind that the beer swilling morons riding bare-chested in the back of a pickup truck with Confederate flag proudly flying are nothing but barely concealed bigots, especially when you see them in Elwood, Indiana.

My guess is that none of these Confederate flag wavers could place a date on the Civil War within 20 years of when it happened. The sacrifices of the average Confederate soldier means nothing to these people. It's just another way to say "I hate black people" and cloak it as a noble historical struggle.

While my gut instinct is to defend the existence of Confederate monuments around the South, there is still something that gnaws at me from within. I'm thinking of a small black child, holding hands with his mother or father as they walk in the town square of just about any town in the South. He looks up at the statue of a soldier with a gun and asks his parent, "What did that man do, daddy?" I can just hear the response. "Well son, he fought for the Confederacy. They tried to keep the black man enslaved while Abraham Lincoln and the Union soldiers fought to free the slaves." What kind of a message does this send a black child, or a white child for that matter? Was it noble to fight to preserve a way of life when that way of life was reprehensible?

I have had the personal fortune to visit many of the great battlefields of Europe and its great cities where titanic battles were fought during the Thirty Years War, The Napoleonic Wars, World War I and World War II. For the most part, there is virtually no recognition of the Thirty Years War or the men who fought it. The Napoleonic Wars have been reduced to an occasional road sign. World War I monuments are to be found virtually everywhere, particularly in the Allied countries. World War II monuments are visible at key locations, but, once again, generally only in the Allied countries.

My first trip to northern France was interesting as I debarked a ferry at Calais and drove through the French countryside, home to several of the colossal battles of World War I. There was a massive black cross on the battlefield of Ypres in tribute to the dead German soldiers. Later, on a trip to Normandy Beach, I visited Le Cambe, the German Cemetery home to 21,000 dead German

soldiers. For the French, who were completely devastated by two world wars, not to mention the War of 1870, by German aggression, to recognize the sacrifice of German soldiers on their own soil is surprising and yet honorable. No, you won't see swastikas, just row upon row of black German crosses or a huge mound in the case of Le Cambe.

Budapest offers another interesting study in how to deal with your history. When the Russian Army came driving into Hungary, it systematically destroyed anything that spoke of Hungarian patriotism. The Soviet Army did leave Heroes Square intact although some of the heroes who fought against Russia in ancient battles were unceremoniously removed from the square. Fast forward 45 years and the fall of the Iron Curtain. What does a newly freed and patriotic Hungary do with all those massive statues commemorating Russian sacrifice and promoting Communist ideals? The good folks of Budapest gathered up all of the statues and created a park filled to the brim with the best of Soviet statuary. This park now serves as a tourist attraction, but I guess it may also give a few old Communists longing for the good old days a place to play checkers or with nesting dolls.

So now that I've taken a walk on both sides of the issue, what would I do with the huge number of concrete and bronze Confederate statues and memorials throughout

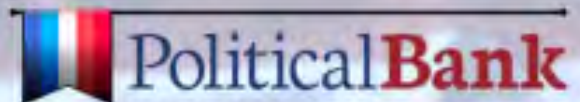
the South?

As an author who has written two Civil War books, I've spent quite a bit of time roaming this country trying to get at the truth and the way things actually happened. I would contend that instead of tearing down the Confederate memorials, we actually need to see more public monuments that bring the issues of slavery and the Civil War into greater clarity. For every Confederate monument, we need to see a corresponding monument to Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass or Martin Luther King. Sites honoring Thurgood Marshall, the Tuskegee Airmen, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver should be as ubiquitous as the lone Confederate rifleman standing on an obelisk on the courthouse square.

The presence of suitable statues and monuments to black leaders will add context to the Civil War story and will counter the Lost Cause narrative that has arrested the development of much of the rural south for so many years. Let's see corporate America open up its wallets and promote the achievements of black scholars, judges, soldiers, inventors, musicians, authors and leaders by erecting memorials and monuments across this country. Let's build up instead of tearing down for a change. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman.

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Looking at Indiana's intra-migration

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – Last week's column in this space left some readers unsatisfied. "It's all well and good to know about people moving in and out of Indiana, but I want to know about my county," Malcolm M. of Montezuma wrote.

I appreciate Malcolm's interest, but it would be difficult to represent Parke County and the other 91 Indiana counties in the allotted space. Hence, I'll hit the high and low points and ask you to send me an email (mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com), if you want detail for your county. Remember, the U.S. Bureau of the Census calls these data the 2015 Vintage. This means they depict a representative year from 2011 to 2015.

Hold on; this merry-data-go-round is taking off.

Of the 6.5 million Hoosiers living in Indiana, 5.5 million (85%) stayed in the same house or apartment as they lived in the preceding year. In 12 counties, more than 90% of the population stayed put. In only four counties, (Putnam and the three college counties, Delaware, Tippecanoe, and Monroe) did fewer than 80% remain in place.

Churning, that is a change of residence within the same county, was greatest in Monroe where 19% of its residents changed their place of residence. Next in line, all above 10%, were Tippecanoe, Delaware, and Madison, followed by 11 other counties. Franklin, Posey and Crawford each had less than 4% churning.

Next consider intra-state migration, the movement of people from one Hoosier county to another. Marion, Hamilton and Monroe had the highest number of in-migrants from other Indiana counties. Marion, Hamilton and Lake were the leaders in sending people to other Indiana counties.

Monroe, Tippecanoe, and Delaware again led the state in net intra-state in-migration. LaPorte, Vigo, Johnson, Knox and Hamilton followed in order with in-bound movers exceeding the number of out-bound movers by 1,000 or more. At the other end of the line were Marion, Lake, Allen, Elkhart and Floyd counties with more than 1,000 each of net intra-state out-migrants.

Net inter-state in-migration, the excess of people from other states over the outward moves of Hoosiers, favored Lake County by more than 1,600 persons. Next in order were LaPorte, Grant, Bartholomew and Howard counties. Trailing all others with net deficits were Marion

(-5,400) and Elkhart (-1,400).

Finally, 23,800 persons moved to Indiana from abroad. Three counties (Marion, Tippecanoe and Monroe) accounted for 43% of this in-migration. We do not know how many people left Indiana for other countries.

Take all of these numbers together and we had nearly 660,000 people moving in or out or both of a Hoosier residence during a one-year period. If we assume 2.56 persons per household in the state, that's 258,000 homes or apartments for sale or rent. It's enough to keep realtors, home furnishing and appliance stores, trailer rentals and many others nicely busy. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.



Selecting a new Lake Sheriff

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Lake County Democrats are about to select a new sheriff without the help of the general public. It's happened before. In the mid-1980s, Democrats picked a new sheriff when Rudy Bartolomei was indicted. Bartolomei went into the witness protection system and helped launch Operation Lights Out, the most



extensive federal investigation into public corruption in the history of the state. Lights Out resulted in a slew of federal indictments and sent several elected officials to jail.

Lake County Democrats will elect another sheriff at a precinct caucus on Sept. 16. Sheriff John Buncich was removed from office last week upon his conviction on bribery charges in connection with county towing contracts.

It used to be that convicted public officials stayed in office – while collecting fat paychecks – until sentencing. The Legislature in recent years, largely prompted by Lake County, changed the law to remove an elected official from office upon conviction.

When Schererville attorney and longtime Democratic Party official James L. Wieser was elected chairman on March 4, he said changing the party's image of being corrupt was a top priority. Ironically, it was Buncich as the outgoing chairman who broke the tie vote between Wieser

and County Commission Mike Repay to pick the new chairman.

Wieser's job just got a little tougher with the Buncich conviction and Dec. 6 sentencing fresh in the minds of Lake County voters. But Wieser has one thing going for him. This isn't the first time the county Democrats have had their backs to the wall because of public corruption. And virtually every time, Democrats have come back unscathed.

Buncich seemingly has handed county Republican Chairman Dan Derrnuc the perfect campaign weapon. One would think that Republicans would buy time



on every outdoor billboard in the county and post a picture of Buncich and the question, "Had enough?"

Chances are good that it won't happen. Republicans have had plenty of chances to do that very thing. And they haven't once taken action to do so. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.

Photography With Punch

Mark Curry On Indiana Politics

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Who steps up in this dark period?

By LEE HAMILTON

BLOOMINGTON – Our nation is in a dark period. Can we pull ourselves out? Keep this in mind: Our institutions are far more durable than any single president or any single historical period.

An interesting thing keeps happening to me. Every few days, someone – an acquaintance, a colleague, even a stranger on the street – approaches me. They ask some version of the same question: What can we do to pull ourselves out of this dark period?



For the many Americans who respect representative democracy, the Constitution, and the rule of law, there's reason to be concerned. The president is off to a rocky start; he's unproductive and undignified at home and derided on the world stage. Congress struggles to get its bearings. In the country at large, forces of intolerance and division are at loose on the streets and on the nightly news.

So are we in a downward spiral as a nation? Not by a long shot. Because here's the thing to keep in mind: Our institutions are far more durable than any single president or any single historical period.

History is certainly on our side. We've survived a civil war, two world wars, Watergate, four presidential assassinations, the packing of the Supreme Court by Franklin Roosevelt, economic depressions and recessions, more nasty power struggles than you can count – and still the country has moved forward. You can look back and gain confidence from our history.

Or you can look around you. Congress as an institution is being tested as it rarely has in its modern history, and it's shown a few hopeful glimmers. It did so when it passed by a huge margin its sanctions bill against Russia, rebuking President Trump for his mysterious fascination with Vladimir Putin and his unwillingness to single out Russia for criticism.

It did so even more forcefully when Republican leaders in the Senate took the extraordinary step of holding pro forma sessions during recesses so that a Republican president could not make recess appointments and circumvent the normal Senate confirma-

tion process — or, to be more precise, so that he could not fire the attorney general and then appoint someone who would fire Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

The federal bureaucracy has drawn lines in the sand, too. When the president suggested that law enforcement officers should, in essence, rough up suspects, the acting chief of the Drug Enforcement Administration sent an email to his employees rebuking the idea. When the president announced plans to discriminate against transgender troops, the Pentagon declined to begin the process.

When two billionaire friends of the president tried to force federal regulators to bend rules in their favor, they were rebuffed by the agencies in question. There's been real pushback by Foreign Service officers against a move to hollow out the State Department. And, the courts have blocked various Trump immigration policies.

At the state and local level, there's been similar resistance. Though some states appear ready to go along with the Presidential Advisory Commission on Voter Integrity's maneuvering to shrink the vote, many are not. California Gov. Jerry Brown and other governors and mayors took a major step when they indicated that they will still be working to address climate change even after President Trump declared the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris climate accord.

And it's not just pushback: The failure by Congress and the President to make progress on funding the rebuilding or expansion of basic infrastructure has alarmed governors, mayors, and policy makers throughout state and local government, who are demanding action on infrastructure problems.

Then, of course, there are the business and other leaders who resigned from various presidential advisory boards in the wake of the president's response to the Charlottesville clashes in early August. And the scientists, including some within the government, who are trying to draw attention to administration efforts to weaken the role of scientists in environmental regulation and climate policy.

And an aroused, watchful national media that has worked hard to shine a light on the administration's actions and the president's activity. And the many Americans who besieged Congress as the Senate considered repealing the Affordable Care Act.

In other words, our institutions – Congress, the executive branch, the courts, civil society – are being put to the test. And they're beginning to step up. So must we all. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies. He served in Congress for 34 years.

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YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?

Doug Ross, NWI Times: Indiana state Auditor Tera Klutz is pushing for visibility for both herself and government data in Indiana. Klutz is beginning to make the rounds in Indiana to gain name recognition. She's running for that office in 2018, though she won't officially announce it until September. But she doesn't have much of a record to run on because she has been in office only since January. Klutz is the latest in a string of auditors in the past several years. Tim Berry was elected state auditor in 2010 but resigned in August 2013 when he was elected chairman of the Indiana Republican Party. He was replaced by Dwayne Sawyer, the first African-American man to hold that office. Sawyer lasted until November 2013, resigning for personal reasons. The next auditor, Suzanne Crouch, took office in January 2014 and resigned Jan. 9, 2017, to become lieutenant governor. Klutz has a mere pittance in her campaign fund, so she'll need to start passing the hat soon. But while she needs to focus on her own visibility, she seems even more focused on making government data more transparent. We spoke at length last week in Merrillville. Klutz said she wants to enhance the Indiana Transparency Portal because it can be difficult to get to the data you want to find. Among the links she wants to add are for the top 10 salaries for state employees, top vendors, top consultants and biggest contracts. ❖



Jeff Ward, Muncie Star Press: People are outraged, and rightly so, over the events that took place in Charlottesville, Va., last month. And with outrage comes demands for action, some of them not well thought out. In Indiana, that call for action is a renewed push for the state to enact hate crimes legislation. Indiana is just one of five states with no specific hate crimes legislation on the books. (I'll save you the Google search: the others are South Carolina, Wyoming, Arkansas and Georgia.) Hoosiers are often reluctant to join the crowd, but I think it's time the state at least does more than a quick study on whether we need a hate crimes law. Let's have a serious conversation on the positives and potential drawbacks of having such a law on the books. First, a definition: Hate crimes are motivated by biases such as gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. Attempts to pass hate crimes bills have been defeated routinely in Indiana, six consecutive years. Bias-motivated crimes occur all-too-often in Indiana. Since last November, swastikas were painted near South Bend River Lights and outside a dorm room at Earlham College. There were reports of KKK graffiti in Bloomington and anti-Semitic and anti-gay slurs on a Brown County church. A Jewish cemetery in Fort Wayne was vandalized. Last month, more swastikas appeared in Richmond. Some of these acts could be "just kids" committing acts of vandalism, but not all. Some were criminal without having to parse what the perpetrator(s) were thinking. But intent is well-baked into Indiana law. From an Indianapolis Star editorial of Nov. 26: "... we regularly consider the

perpetrator's 'intent' when committing crimes. This is why we distinguish between voluntary and involuntary manslaughter, between first- and second-degree murder. Did you mean to kill him or did you do it by accident." When talking hate crime, intent carries a burden for prosecutors to show that the accused knew his victim belonged to a protected class and it was an underlying reason for committing the crime. That's a high bar to clear, which is just fine. It's a very slippery slope when weighing a person's thoughts or beliefs when prosecuting a crime. The question becomes: should we take a step toward allowing government to punish people for their beliefs, no matter how repugnant? Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma, a Republican, said judges already have the power to consider motives during the sentencing phase. "I think it's time to label now what we have as hate-crime legislation to dispel really the misconception that it cannot be considered by a judge in sentencing, because it can," he said. ❖

Phillip Carter, vox: During his campaign for the White House, Donald Trump took the highly-unusual step of blasting America's top generals, arguing in one debate that they'd been "reduced to rubble" and later threatening to fire them if they didn't tell him what he wanted to hear. If elected, Trump promised to put top generals into key jobs – and then to give them the freedom to fight America's wars without micromanagement from the White House. True to his word, Trump has surrounded himself with a trio of well-respected current and retired generals: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a former Marine general best known for a successful tour through one of the bloodiest parts of Iraq; White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, a retired Marine general who served three tours in Iraq, oversaw Guantanamo Bay and was a top aide to two secretaries of defense; and National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, a three-star general in the Army with a celebrated Iraq war record of his own. The three men's prominence, and their long history of distinguished service, has led many inside and outside the White House to see them as the adults in the room who would be guiding Trump toward a calmer, more stable, more rational foreign policy than what he alluded to during his campaign. The three men, in turn, have spent months traveling the globe to reassure allies that Trump hasn't meant what he said when the president threatened a preemptive strike on North Korea (which terrified Japan and South Korea) or talked about pulling out of NATO and cozying up to Russia (which terrified much of Europe). But seven months into his term, that conventional wisdom is looking increasingly shaky. Trump is openly at odds with many current and former military leaders in his administration on issues ranging from Afghanistan (the generals want more troops than he's inclined to send) to his proposed ban on transgender troops (the Pentagon opposes). The disagreements have recently reached a fever pitch over North Korea. ❖

110k Hoosier kids with grandparents

INDIANAPOLIS — It's no secret that a rise in grandfamilies has coincided with the ongoing drug epidemic (Myers, CNHI). As more children are removed from their parents' homes, more kinship placement situations arise. And grandparents often serve as the first choice for DCS officials. In fact, over 110,000 Hoosier children under 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents, according to 2017 statistics provided by the AARP, Children's Defense Fund, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and others. That constitutes 7 percent of the state's children. In conjunction, more than 60,000 grandparents are householders responsible for their grandchildren, and nearly 20 percent of those grandparents are in poverty. Twenty-seven percent have a disability. Those figures have jumped dramatically in the last decade.



Donnelly wants more NK sanctions

INDIANAPOLIS — North Korea's testing of a more advanced missile and the possibility that it could have a weapon that could reach the U.S. mainland is a threat to global security, said Sen. Joe Donnelly (Davis, WIBC). But, he said U.S. allies in Asia should put more pressure on North Korea to back down. "North Korea's provocative tests are a threat to the U.S. and the entire global community," Donnelly said in a statement. "I reiterate my urgent call that North Korea's unacceptable actions be met by a comprehensive U.S. strategy that involves our allies from around the world. It is also long past time for China to step up to seriously and credibly confront the North Korean threat, a topic I will be pressing this week as the Senate Banking Committee examines sanctions enforcement on both

North Korea and China."

Trump adopts Pence road plan

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's \$1 trillion plan to rebuild America's infrastructure may be unprecedented in size and ambition, but it mimics a controversial scheme championed by Vice President Mike Pence when he was the governor of Indiana (O'Neal & Sirota, Newsweek). That's why Pence is the public face of the Trump initiative, and executives from financial firms that helped privatize Indiana's toll road are in the White House, busily sculpting Trump's national plan... Pence began his vice presidency with a trip to Australia to promote Trump's infrastructure plan to foreign investors. Only weeks later, the Interstate 69 privatization deal he championed as Indiana's governor collapsed amid construction delays, allegations of financial mismanagement and a spike in traffic accidents, culminating in the return of the section of the road under private control to the state in mid-August of this year. At the same time, the foreign firm Pence approved to run the 156-mile Indiana Toll Road announced it would be hammering economically battered northwest Indiana with huge toll increases.

Carson disputes report on staffer

WASHINGTON — Rep. Andre Carson (D-Ind.) said a shared IT employee whom now faces bank fraud charges was fired because he "could no longer perform" his job (McKinney, WRTV). Imran Awan was fired from working in Carson's office in February months after Awan and his brothers were implicated in the possible theft of computer equipment. "Imran was/is not, never has been a staffer of the office of Congressman Carson," Carson said. "He is what's called a shared employee." Carson also criticized The Daily Caller, a conservative media

outlet that reported on Awan. He said The Daily Caller is pushing a false narrative. "The Daily Caller is not a reputable entity," Carson said. "I think that they've proven themselves to be very bigoted, Islamophobic and anti-black."

Trump to end DACA today

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has decided to end the Obama-era program that grants work permits to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the country as children, according to two sources familiar with his thinking (Politico). Senior White House aides huddled Sunday afternoon to discuss the rollout of a decision likely to ignite a political firestorm — and fulfill one of the president's core campaign promises. The administration's deliberations on the issue have been fluid and fast moving, and the president has faced strong warnings from members of his own party not to scrap the program. Trump has wrestled for months with whether to do away with the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA. But conversations with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who argued that Congress — rather than the executive branch — is responsible for writing immigration law, helped persuade the president to terminate the program and kick the issue to Congress, the two sources said.

Banks sees path for Dreamers

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN) issued the following statement backs Trump on DACA. "President Trump is fulfilling a campaign pledge by reasserting that Congress, not the executive branch, has the constitutional role of setting our country's immigration policy," Banks said. "President Obama never had the legal authority to change our nation's immigration laws. Congress must seize this opportunity and pass a solution."