

Federal power increase could be dangerous

There's suspicion in some circles that President Obama is moving to solidify potential control of the country using federal troops. Constitutionalists worry that creation of a Council of Governors to coordinate response by the Defense Department, Homeland Security, state and federal agencies, the U.S. military Northern Command and the state National Guards poses a threat to our liberty. That could be; use of federal troops within U.S. borders has always been considered a risky move, not forbidden as such, but not done. You can count on your hands the number of times federal troops have gone into action on home soil. George Washington proposed to use state militias to enforce tax laws during the so-called Whiskey Rebellion, but the issue was settled before he could carry out his threat.

President Eisenhower used federal troops to enforce a court order integrating schools in Little Rock, Ark. And of course, Abraham Lincoln did send blue-suited troops into the south to put down the late rebellion. In some quarters, those are still considered controversial actions. The current proposal seems to be aimed more at use of troops in emergency situations, whether it might be a terrorist attack, a hurricane or some other disaster of extreme magnitude. The council would coordinate state and federal response. A treaty with Canada quietly signed in recent years would allow joint action by troops of both countries. States have shown they can handle most disasters themselves. New York responded to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks with dignity and aplomb, but then New York City has more police, fire and medical resources than most states.

Some disasters pose such a broad and deep challenge that they defy state and local resources, however. The great San Francisco earthquake cut the city off from the rest of the world for days. Fire swept the ruins and officials despaired of keeping order. Only the Army, under Gen. Fred Funston, a Kansan who commanded U.S. troops at the Presidio, working with city authorities, could quell disorder and keep the peace. What the general and San Francisco's mayor did, declaring a form of martial law, was not considered exactly legal by scholars of the day, but it worked.

Similarly, after public order dissolved in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, only the arrival of the U.S. Army, carrying M-16 rifles, could restore order in the flooded city. The disaster was too complete, the city's forces too broken, to do it alone. We hope this council will help form a way to regulate federal response in situations where it is truly needed, but that has happened only a few times in our history. It seems unlikely that most of us will see the day when troops are needed again to solve a civil issue.

And while it's true, in the best of all possible worlds, that federal aid in such situations should be planned and regulated, not invented by the commander on the scene, it's also true that once the feds step in with money and people, states are glad to take the money and often back away from their own responsibilities.

Witness the current mindless clamor to claim federal "disaster" money anytime hail or wind or minor flooding strikes. Twenty years ago, that was unheard of. Today, every county wants as much "federal money" as it can get.

And we shouldn't encourage reliance on federal help, federal troops or federal agencies. States can and should solve most of their own problems. As to the constitutional danger, those do exist, and we should guard against them. The Council of Governors and the linkage between state and federal agencies, born of a Bush-era budget bill, could be benign. It could be a danger.

We can only say, as with so many things that increase the power of the federal government in all areas, that it bears watching. Federal power, a sleeping bear, has the potential to be dangerous. If the time ever comes when we wake up in the bear's embrace, it will be too late to do anything about it. — Steve Haynes

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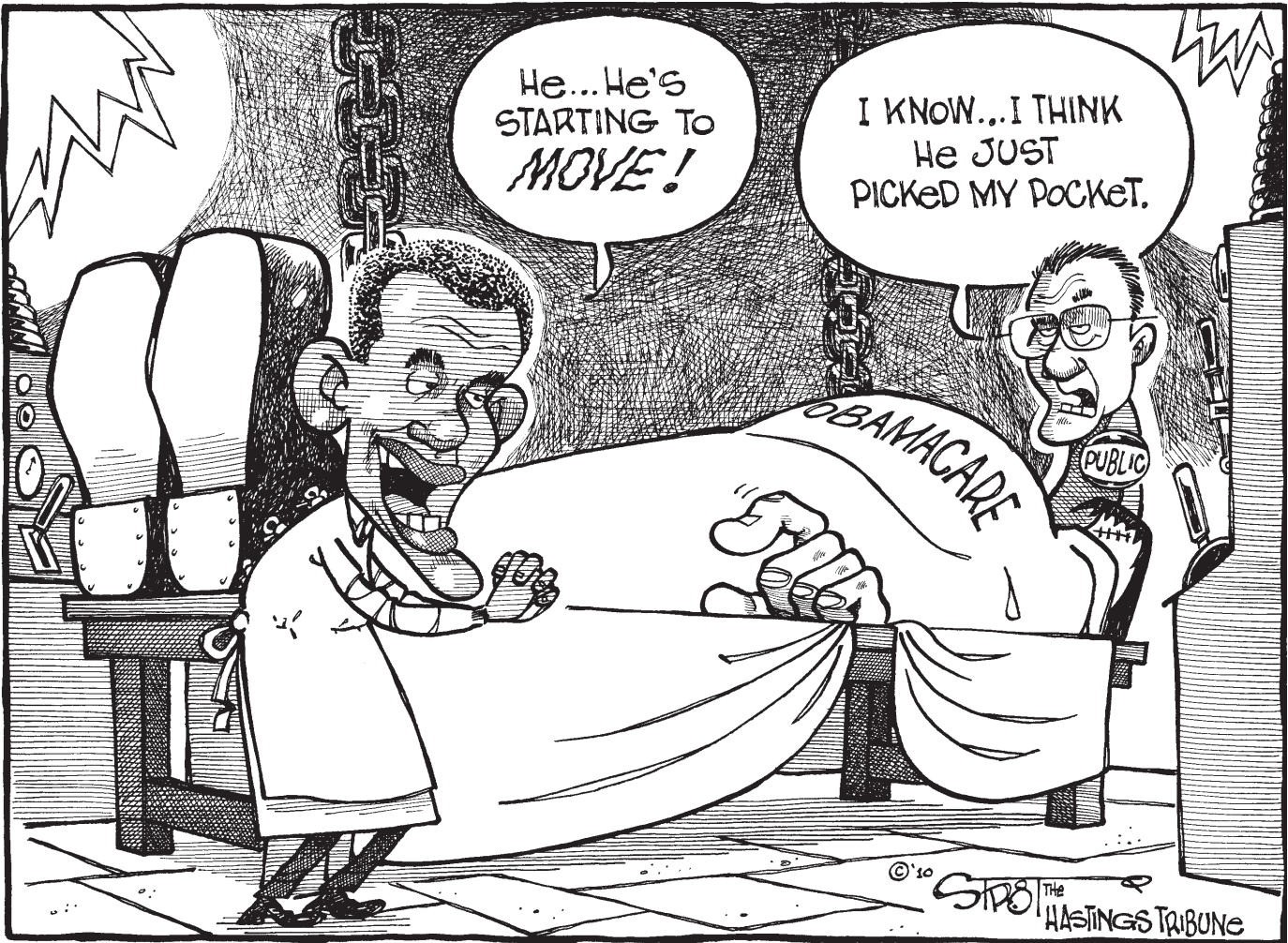
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October mission trip whets appetite

It's bad enough I'm semi-addicted to the home improvement/decorating shows. Lately, I've been catching a few segments of cooking shows. This morning I watched "Mexican Made Easy" and picked up the recipe for Chocoflan. It sounds like a yummy combination of chocolate cake and flan. Flan is a delicious custard-like dessert I was introduced to in New York. In fact, when Jim announced he was heading into town for a new tire, I asked him to stop by the store and get a quart of buttermilk. He doesn't know it but, he's going to get "Chocoflaned" tonight.

Maybe I'm thinking "Mexican" because our October mission trip is coming up. We're doing something different this year. The ministry group we work with, Casas por Cristo, has developed the idea of "Team Casas". During the second week of October people from all over the country will meet in El Paso and will be assigned to teams of 15-20 per team. We'll all cross the border together and build houses for as many families as we have teams. So far, there are enough teams for two houses. Hopefully,

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



there will be three or four teams by the deadline. We're excited. It will be fun to work with people we've never met before. We know that they're folks, probably a lot like us: willing to step out of their comfort zone a little and to say, "I'll go, send me".

Anyway, getting ready to go is the hard part. We've sold the calves (the money we make from them finances the trip). That still leaves the chickens and cats that have to be fed and cared for every day. We haven't mentioned it to son James yet, but he probably assumes he'll be tapped for the duty.

The other part is delegating out our other responsibilities of filling the pulpit at the little country church where Jim preaches four Sundays a month; the

prison ministry; and operating the hospitality house. You know what, though? Good people always step forward and things always seem to get done. In fact, the preacher spoke on that very issue Sunday. He said we should be guiding younger people in how to fill our roles. We hate to admit it, but the day will come when we'll have to relinquish control and let someone else do it. If we don't, the ministry will stop when we do. And, that's not what we want. We want it to continue.

Of course, we can't go through Texas without planning to see our kids. Jennifer and Becky are in San Antonio along with four of our granddaughters and our new great-grandson. Then, we are planning a "little" side-trip to New Orleans to see my friend, Galene, who I haven't seen in about 25 years. Jim is all for it. He heard there is good Cajun food in Louisiana. From New Orleans we'll head to Dallas to see our other two girls and granddaughter. Then, it will be on home. By that time, home will look pretty good.

Farmers markets a social gathering place

Insight
John Schlageck

ably safe. There's also a sense of responsibility for vendors who face the people buying their goods. Vendors like markets because they can sell their home-produced products directly with no middleman. The producer is also the marketer. In most phases of production agriculture the producer rarely has a chance to participate in this level of marketing. If a farmer grows wheat, he can sell it but has no control over price. In a farmers' market he can set the price and negotiate. Farmers' markets are popular with many people. In university towns like Manhattan and Lawrence international students, used to shopping in markets rather than grocery stores, frequent them.

Senior citizens are also regulars. Markets are also popular with rural to urban transplants. Folks raised in rural areas like that connection with the farm. Without a doubt, farmers' markets are a happening, a community event and a place to socialize. Many shoppers rise early, so they can talk to people and secure the best produce. Shopping in an outdoor venue is just more fun. There's nothing like an open-air venue to buy fresh, healthy food. After a recent trip, I listened as a younger shopper told me it's serious, part of a socially responsible life. "I'm buying from people in my own community," she said. "I'm supporting people who I live with." Farmers' markets are family affairs. Kids are as much a part of scene as vendors and customers. Kids like to eat too, and they know what they like.

And for the children who help their parents sell products, it's a primary learning experience. I've seen many a second or third grader making change as Mom hands over the goods. The friendly relationship, festive atmosphere and quality produce all make the farmers' market a popular community event. While I go to the market mainly for juicy, mouth-watering tomatoes and fresh, brown farm eggs, I sometimes find something I haven't bargained for or something my wife or I can't replicate at home. My favorite purchase at the Manhattan farmers' market are homemade tamales and salsa from a Topeka vendor. Talk about wonderful. I'd go to our farmers' market even if I didn't buy something, but that'll never happen because I love to eat too much. I just like being there. It's the best show in town. John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas.



Thumbs Up to Norman and Georgia Nelson for all they have done for our community. Called in.
Thumbs Up to Carol Erlenbusch for all of her hard work and long hours she put into getting the Moving Wall here to Norton. Emailed in.
Thumbs Up to the American Legion Riders for their commitment, hard work and for guarding the Moving Wall while it was here. Mailed in.
Thumbs Up to all who volunteered in any way shape or form to get the Moving Wall here and while it was here. You helped make it a very wonderful, pleasurable and memorable experience. Called in.
Thumbs Up to Prairie Land Electric for providing the land for the Moving Wall. Brought in.