

Free Press Viewpoint

Governors council a grab for power?

There's suspicion in some circles that President Obama is moving to make possible 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, if not forbidden, just 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 call up state militias to enforce tax laws during the so-called Whiskey Rebellion but never had to.

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.

The current proposal seems to be aimed more at use of troops in emergencies, whether a terrorist attack, a hurricane or some other disaster of extreme magnitude, though it could apply to an insurrection. 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 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. 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.

We hope this council will help form a way to regulate federal response where it is 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 to solve a civil issue.

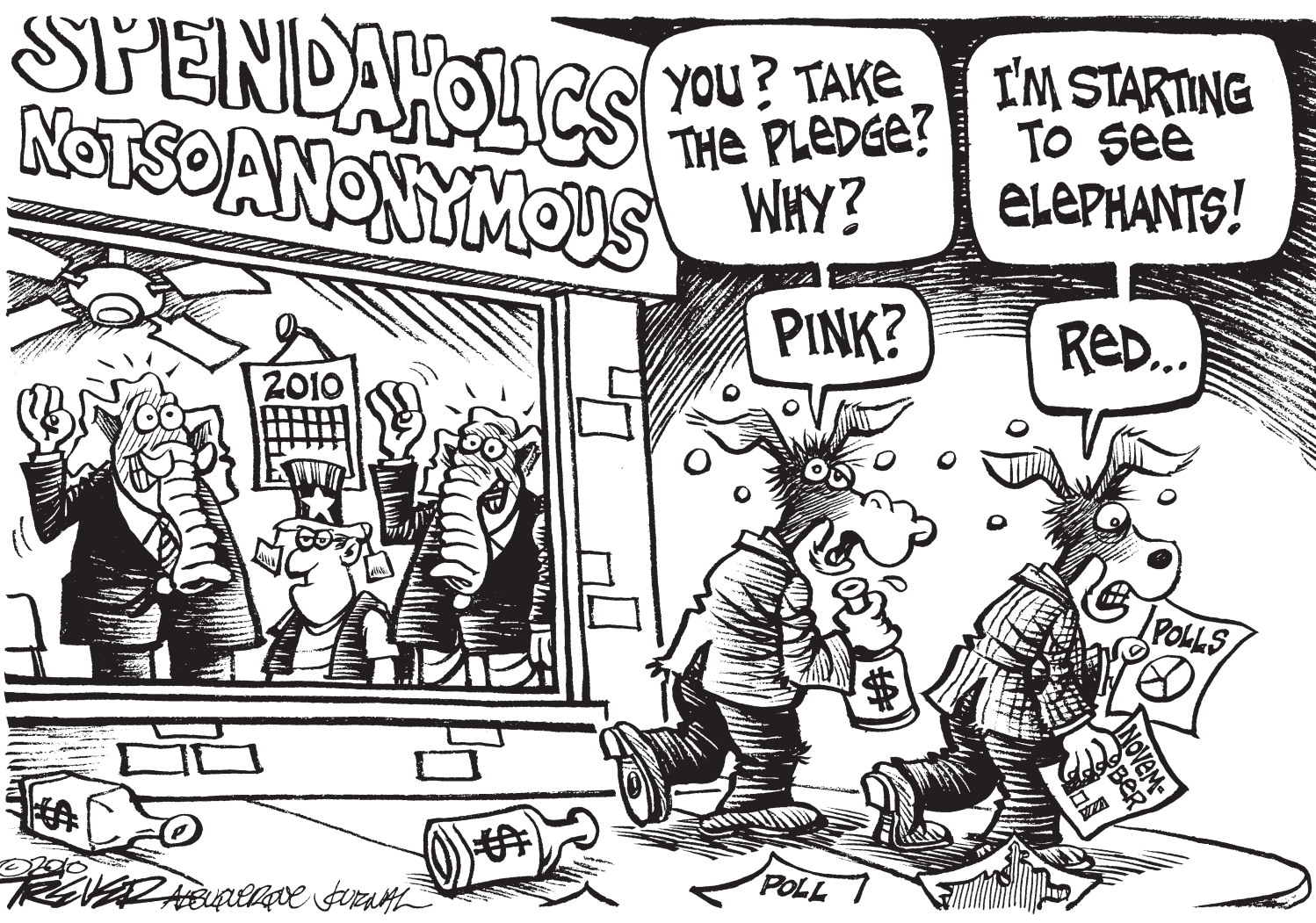
And while it's true, in the best of all possible worlds, that federal aid in such situations should be planned and regulated, not invented by the commander on the scene, it's also true that once the feds step in with money and people, states are glad to take the money and back away from their responsibilities.

As to the constitutional danger, it does exist, and we should guard against it. The Council of Governors and the linkage between state and federal agencies, born of a Bush-era budget bill, might 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 needs watching. Federal power, a sleeping bear, can 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



Ah, the things youngsters don't remember

I seem to be spending more and more of my time with youngsters, or at least people younger than me.

And with every passing year, that number grows a lot.

I like to tell stories, but these days a lot of my references just go over their heads. I feel like the opposite of the protagonist in the second "Back to the Future" movie trying to get a drink at the drug store.

I finally sat down and wrote out a list of things that I remember or lived through that many of my co-workers might not remember.

- I'm so old:
- I remember when we didn't have a television set — no one we knew one did.
- I attended a Peter, Paul and Mary concert.
- I remember where I was when John F. Kennedy was shot.
- I watched the Mickey Mouse Club, Captain Kangaroo and Howdy Doody on television at my grandparents' house, since they had one of the first televisions in town.
- I was in college when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon.
- I remember when people got mad when they got an answering machine.
- I shook former Vice President Nelson Rockefeller's hand.
- I remember when Dwight Eisenhower was president and Nixon was vice president.
- Phones came in black and they all had a cord. In fact, until I was in high school, we talked to the operator to make a phone call.
- I remember the Cold War and worrying that the Russians were going to nuke us all.
- Railroads still ran passenger trains, so you could take the Sante Fe, Missouri Pacific or Burlington to get somewhere.
- No one from earth had ever been in space. Space travel was strictly science fiction.



Cynthia Haynes

Open Season

- People got killed going over the Berlin Wall and we ran a supply-drop air lift when the Communists closed off West Berlin, which was in East Germany.
- I used the phone in the lobby of my dorm to call my parents every Sunday night but kept those calls short because long distance was expensive.
- Milk came in bottles and sometimes it came in bottles with the cream at the top.
- Everyone got the chicken pox. If one child in town got them, parents would take their children over for "pox parties" so they could get it over with. Most children also got measles and mumps.
- When I was in grade school, Juan Batista was the evil dictator of Cuba and Fidel Castro was the rebel leader who was going to save the country.
- I remember when transistor radios made music mobile. You could suddenly take your radio to the porch, the mountains, the lake.
- There was no such thing as Diet Coke.
- When I first started wearing hose, I made sure the seams were straight and kept them up with garters.
- Several of my classmates served in the Vietnam War.
- My husband Steve visited New York when he was in high school but didn't visit the twin towers of the World Trade Center — because they hadn't been built yet.

- I remember racial segregation and all the disturbances it took to abolish it.
- Maxwell House and Folgers were the coffeees most people drank and a cup cost 5 or 10 cents at a restaurant or you made it in the percolator at home.
- The drug store sold 5 cent Cokes and theater tickets were 50 cents for children and 75 cents for adults.
- One of the sayings for something that was never expected to change was, "Is the pope Italian?"
- Band Aids came only in dead white or a tan shade known as flesh.
- Central air was virtually unheard of but people had window fans, swamp coolers and the occasional window unit.
- People sat out on the front porch at night, not on the patio or back-yard deck.
- A vaccine for polio had not been invented and one of my grade-school friends contracted the dread disease.
- I really did see *I Love Lucy* and *The Andy Griffin Show* the first time around, and watched the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.
- However:**
- I did not have to crank the car to start it.
- Air travel had been invented by the time I was born.
- I did not live through the Great Depression or World War II.
- Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt and Queen Victoria were dead before I was born.
- So there you have it: I'm not older than dirt, but it's likely I'm older than you. (No, Mother I'm not talking about you.)
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Who benefits from tax cuts?

Extending the Bush-era tax reforms, letting them expire, or tinkering with them is on the front burner. Do we sometimes forget who we are and where we are on the economic landscape?

Do tax cuts stimulate the economy, and if so, who is benefiting and who is not? Are the tax savings being invested in businesses that are increasing production, or are they being spent on consumer goods?

How many of those tax savings are being used to gobble up smaller entrepreneurs and corporations that are failing? Which end of the economic status profile is rising and which is falling?

Statistics tell us the wealthy have gained wealth and the poor have actually gotten poorer since these tax cuts. How is that? We have statistics showing that the number of folks in the poverty class has increased, while the middle class has kind of held its ground, but the wealthiest 1 to 5 percent of our population have held their positions and increased their wealth substantially.

Where are you on the economic grist mill? Are you going to be sitting at the king's table and enjoying the finest cakes, or will you find yourself sifting through the chaff and hoping for an edible barley cake?

If you are in the middle (\$40,000 to \$200,000 taxable income), you are paying a higher percentage of the cost of maintaining a civilized society than you were before the most recent



Ken Poland

Ken's World

tax "reforms." And, if the right succeeds in the total elimination of estate and capital gains taxes, you and your grandkids will be paying a higher percentage yet.

Can we blame the tax reforms of the Bush era for all of this? Probably not. But, they have certainly done nothing to slow that trend. The facts are, the trend has accelerated the redistribution of wealth. Wealth has gone out of the middle in both directions.

The most reliable measure of wealth is reflected by net worth, and net worth which hasn't kept pace with inflation doesn't move you up in the system. A savings account that won't buy as much consumer product at the end of the year as it would have at the beginning can show an increase, but you have actually lost ground in your ability to participate and compete in the marketplace. Statistics indicate that the number of people falling from the middle class into the lower class has numerically been far greater than the move upward into the higher economic status.

Increasing net worth of the wealthiest seg-

ment of society will not increase the demand for consumer products. And, without increased demand, why would manufacturers increase production? The argument supporting tax reform and the trickle-down theory, mainly driven from the Republican side of the aisle, simply does not hold water.

Look at the profile of the so-called third-world countries. The vast majority of the people live in abject poverty and a very few live in luxurious comfort. The graph line is steep between the two extremes.

Are we headed for third world status? Statistics indicate that we are.

The pure capitalistic system of economics, without any restraints, has never produced a civilized environment or culture that respects the worth of all human beings and their welfare. Will less government automatically improve the morals and ethics of society?

The majority of you Tea Party fans will most likely find yourselves sipping watered-down tea while the elite of society are sipping the finest of wines, if the Tea Party succeeds with its agenda.

Sorry, that's my opinion, and I just couldn't resist the temptation to throw it in.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semi-retired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.com.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

