

KeizerOpinion

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City should look at McNary safety first

By CHARLES ANDERSON

I am writing in response to Mayor Cathy Clark's column (*City looking at McNary parking*, Keizertimes, March 17).

The safety of the kids is the first priority and this situation has created some compromised safety issues for the students and also along with the parking issues disrupting the lives of the residents of and around Newberg Drive N.

First off let me inform you that this problem of traffic and parking did not exist until sometime mid-term of the school year of 2015-16, and the school was already overcrowded prior to that. All of a sudden the traffic and parking became a huge issue in middle of that school year to this neighborhood. I wonder how they got by prior to this issue since the overcrowding was about the same then as it is today? (Enrollment at McNary in 2013 was 2,107; in 2016 it is 2,075.)

This problem just all of a sudden came to be, if you don't believe me, ask some of the residents who are fairly new to Newberg Drive. They told me that they would not have purchased here if they knew this problem was coming and it was not that way when they both invested in their homes here just a few years ago.

During the 2015-16 school year, and before, parents were able to deliver their kids to school without knowing to use Newberg Drive. Since there are no huge differences in student enrollment numbers the only solution is to revert back to that time.

This problem exists for convenience rather than necessity. Now that the word is out for an additional drop off point on Newberg Drive and MacArthur Street plus "free parking" on the "under maintained" street of MacArthur Street and in the cul de sac of Max Court, this neighborhood is being taken advantage of and with less safety for the students. In order to stop these safety and parking issues then there are really only two ways to accomplish it and anything else would be a patch job and very ineffective. This patchwork would also enable and help justify the school to continue to make Newberg Drive unsafe and the cul de sac into a high school parking lot. So the two solutions are as follows:

Number one (the best solution) is by locking the gate at MacArthur Street and making McNary a closed campus at least until they make a better parking lot or find another solution to their overcrowding. There would be zero cost (I say it again: *zero cost!*) to lock the gate and could be implemented in just a few days to notify the students and par-

ents the gate is closed and these safety and parking problems would be solved just like we didn't have these problems in 2015 and prior. Once again these problems were not here during and prior to the last school year so the parents and students obviously got by with the overcrowding of the school, so its really more about convenience of the parents to drop off students and the "free parking" for students in a cul de sac that was designed to

keep traffic and vehicles at a minimum and certainly not to be used as a school parking lot.

Solution number two is not the best—it would certainly tone down the traffic and not do much of anything about the parking issues—is to open the gates on Sandy and Robbindale drives, plus possibly adding another gate to Orchard Street. (note the Orchard Street gate would not be any less safe than the students crossing four lanes of traffic in McNary and through the parking lot at the entry from MacArthur Street.)

I agree that adding street lights would be very nice for Newberg Drive, but it is another slim patch up job for the kids safety that doesn't do anything at all except when it is dark outside. Adding permit parking in this neighborhood would be costly and very difficult for the city and the neighbors to manage and is yet another flimsy patch job when making McNary into a closed campus is a quick and easy fix, with only the inconvenience that they have already endured previously.

In the last city council meeting City Manager Chris Eppley said that he can not order the school to lock the gate but has tried to get them to lock it, but I would be willing to bet that he has some clout inside the borders of Keizer and Salem-Keizer School District. This is about the safety issues of the students plus the upsetting of the lives of the people who live in and around Newberg Drive.

Mr. Eppley and Mayor Clark I am asking you to step up and use your powers to stop this madness caused by the new principal of McNary and the Salem-Keizer School District. You could file Quality Assurance Model (QAM) papers with the school district and show objection. You could also go public and announce your position strongly since I know you really care about student safety and possibly even for the residents of this neighborhood. I think the Salem-Keizer School District would listen to you. Once again, I am asking the city of Keizer to stand up for your citizens both young and old and stop the school from causing safety issues and making this neighborhood a very uncomfortable place to live.

(Charles Anderson lives in Keizer.)

guest
opinion

The world watches a shrinking presidency

By MICHAEL GERSON

It is difficult to overestimate the geopolitical risks of this moment—or the (both disturbed and eager) global scrutiny now being given to the American president.

Aggression is growing along the westward reach of Russian influence and the southern boundary of Chinese influence. Intercontinental nuclear capacity may soon be in the hands of a mental pubescent in North Korea. In the Middle East, a hostile alliance of Russia and Shiite powers is ascendant; radical Sunnis have a territorial foothold and inspire strikes in Western cities; America's traditional Sunni friends and allies feel devalued or abandoned; perhaps 500,000 Syrians are dead and millions of refugees suffer in conditions that incubate anger. Cyber terrorism and cyber espionage are exploiting and weaponizing our own technological dependence. Add to this a massive famine in East Africa, threatening the lives of 20 million people, and the picture of chaos is complete—until the next crisis breaks.

It is in this context that the diplomatic bloopers reel of the last few days has been played—the casual association of British intelligence with alleged surveillance at Trump Tower; the presidential tweets undermining Secretary of State Rex Tillerson during his Asia trip; and the rude and childish treatment given the German chancellor. When Donald Trump and Angela Merkel sat together in the Oval Office, we were seeing the leader of the free world—and that guy pouting in public.

Every new administration has a shakeout period. But this assumes an ability to learn from mistakes. And this would require admitting mis-

takes. The spectacle of an American president blaming a Fox News commentator for a major diplomatic incident was another milestone in the miniaturization of the presidency.

An interested foreigner (friend or foe) must be a student of Trump's temperament, which is just as bad as advertised. He is inexperienced, uninformed, easily provoked and supremely confident in his own judgment. His advantage is the choice of some serious, experienced advisers, including Defense Secretary James

Mattis, national security adviser H.R. McMaster and deputy national security adviser Dina Powell. But success in their jobs depends on the listening skills of Donald Trump. Mere incompetence would be bad enough. But foreigners trying to understand America must now study (of all things) the intellectual influences of White House chief strategist Steve Bannon. His vision of a Western alliance of ethno-nationalist, right-wing populists against globalists, multiculturalists, Islamists and (fill in the blank with your preferred minority) is the administration's most vivid and rhetorically ascendant foreign policy viewpoint. How does this affect the alliances of the previous dispensation? That is the background against which Trump's peevishness is being viewed.

Foreigners see a president who has blamed his predecessor, in banana republic style, of a serious crime, for which FBI Director James Comey testified Monday that there is no evidence. They see an administration whose campaign activities are being actively investigated by the executive branch and Congress. If close Trump associates are directly connected to Russian hacking, foreigners will see

the president engulfed in an impeachment crisis—the only constitutional mechanism that would remove the taint of larceny from the 2016 election.

And foreigners are seeing politics, not national security, in the driver's seat of the administration. Tillerson was given the job of secretary of state, then denied his choice of deputy for political reasons, then ordered to make a 28 percent cut in the budget for diplomacy and development. Never mind that Tillerson has been left a diminished figure. Never mind that stability operations in Somalia and Northern Nigeria—the recruiting grounds of Islamist terrorism—would likely be eliminated under the Trump budget. Never mind that programs to prevent famines would be slashed.

When asked if he was worried about cutting these programs during a famine, budget director Mick Mulvaney responded: "The president said specifically hundreds of times ... I'm going to spend less money on people overseas and more money on people back home. And that's exactly what we're doing with this budget." The benighted cruelty of such a statement—assuming that the only way to help Americans is to let foreign children die—is remarkable, and typical.

The sum total? Foreigners see a Darwinian, nationalist framework for American foreign policy; a diminished commitment to global engagement; a brewing scandal that could distract and cripple the administration; and a president who often conducts his affairs with peevish ignorance.

Some will look at this spectacle and live in fear; others may see golden opportunity.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

Turning policies into numbers

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

President Donald Trump presented a radically different budget blueprint to Congress last week. The new plan would increase defense spending by \$54 billion and fund the increase with targeted cuts in other discretionary spending.

What makes the \$1.1 trillion budget truly unique, Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney told reporters before the rollout, is that "we wrote it using the president's own words. We went through his speeches, we went through articles that have been written about his policies, we talked to him, and we wanted to know what his policies were, and we turned those policies into numbers."

Mulvaney called the blueprint an "America First" spending plan, a "hard-power budget" that moves spending from soft-power programs like foreign aid and into building up the military itself. Trump's plan would cut the budgets for the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development by 28 percent. While critics are alarmed, the blueprint has a saving grace, according to Mulvaney: "The president ran saying he would spend less money overseas and more money back home."

Critics are appalled. "By increasing military spending by \$54 billion while cutting spending on civilian diplomacy and assistance, the Trump administration is militarizing foreign aid," charged Adam Isacson, senior associate for defense oversight at the Washington Office on Latin America.

As rumors of the pending foreign aid cuts spread last month, more than 120 retired generals and admirals sent a letter to Congress in which they quoted Trump's Defense Secretary James Mattis, who said when he was commander of the U.S. Central Command, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition."

Trump also campaigned on a plan to have Mexico pay for a wall at the U.S. border. But Mulvaney said the proposed budget includes \$1.5 billion for the border wall this year.

Over the years, conservatives have proposed cutting federal funding for a number of pursuits

they consider left-leaning. Rather than talking about cutting these expenses gradually, Trump proposes to eliminate completely funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Legal Services Corporation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the United States Institute for Peace.

In answer to a press question, Mulvaney expounded, "the policy is that we're ending federal involvement with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting."

A reporter asked, "Over a period of years?"

"Well, this year," Mulvaney answered.

Mulvaney has clearly stated that this preliminary or "skinny budget" won't reduce the deficit—but it won't increase deficit spending either. To make a dent in the national debt, Trump would have to cut entitlement spending.

"Unfortunately, the budget does not include any proposals on mandatory spending or revenue and does not include any proposals or projections beyond 2018," the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget opined. "In this sense, this budget ignores the 70 percent of spending that is responsible for 90 percent of spending growth over the next decade and tells us nothing about how the Administration will address the nation's unsustainably rising national debt."

The blueprint next goes to Congress. While Republicans control both the House and the Senate, history shows that for all their fiscal conservative talk, Republicans often are loath to actually cut the cord of federal spending.

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"While nearly every Republican claims to be a fiscal conservative, many of them defend subsidy programs important to their states or personal interests," observed Chris Edwards, editor of the Cato Institute's DownsizingGovernment.org, who tossed out rural business subsidies as an example. "As Trump's proposed cuts are considered on Capitol Hill, it will become more clear to Republican voters which members are real fiscal conservatives and which are defenders of big government subsidies."

Washington simply isn't used to administrations proposing huge cuts that seem likely to end in what one journalist described as the largest proposed reduction in the federal workforce since World War II. That same reporter asked Mulvaney if the White House had considered the "impact on property values." (The question showed that, in a sense, every Beltway homeowner has an interest in keeping the government big.) Clearly Mulvaney had heard the real estate question before. His answer was direct and provoked laughter in the briefing room. "I work for the president of the United States," Mulvaney answered. "The president of the United States, he represents the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Southern Maryland, but he also represents the rest of the country. And I can assure you that we did not write this budget with an eye toward what it would do to the value of your condo."

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