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OPINION

Over Confident Men in Power Often Can't Count

A growing resistance to Trump's tenure

BY LEW CHURCH

Our embattled but still legal occupant of the White House is notoriously bad at math. Donald Trump couldn't guestimate the crowd size of an inaugural parade for all the tea in China. As a beleaguered president, he is also having problems even counting the extent of the growing opposition to his tenure at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Over-confident men in power often can't count. At the end of the 19th century, it appeared that Army Gen. George Armstrong Custer made the same mistake during a confrontation between Sioux Indians in Montana and desperate white men. At a certain point, however, it becomes strategically useful to get an accurate count of the forces gathering around you.

One tactic that has worked for Trump in the past has been spending money from his mountains of financial wealth to target or silence his enemies. In the midst of the battle of the Little Big Horn, General Custer didn't have that option. Custer simply ran out of bullets. Trump asserted he would "never settle" a lawsuit, for example, only to then agree to pay students at his so-called real estate college, Trump Universi-

ty, a \$25 million settlement -- albeit without no admission of fraudulent practices.

More famously, Trump's stash of cash has proven useful to buy the silence of women who have had personal encounters with him. This has been true, up to a point, with both the adult film actress Stormy Daniels and with former Playboy centerfold Karen McDougal. But even in those two cases, payments of up to \$130,000 to try to buy silence had unintended conse-

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quences. This is especially true after the president's personal lawyer of 10 years, Michael Cohen, who pled guilty to a felony regarding campaign finance violations "at the direction" of the president in order to influence the outcome of the election.

Denying knowledge of, and then admitting knowledge of, such hush money payments raises the question of obstruction of justice at the highest level.

Having a stash of cash at the ready also comes in handy when, for the first time in U.S. history, the president refuses to disclose personal and business tax records. The implication is that people in power don't have to disclose such records, even when other presidents have done so in the past. Having such cash resources, without an accounting of tax payments, allows for greater flexibility for improper use of such resources once a candidate takes office.

What we do know is Trump can't count! In terms of the Mueller probe, the 16 felonies committed or pleaded already, including Trump campaign chair Paul Manafort and Trump personal attorney Michael Cohen -- don't appear to be 'adding up' in Trump's mind. Whether the Stormy Daniels situation gets 'added' to this math, or rises to the level of 'high crimes and misdemeanors' -- has yet to be decided.

There is an old German film, directed by the great Werner Herzog, about a conquistador under Juan Pizarro in South America in the 1500s, called "Aquirre, the Wrath of God." Klaus Kinski portrays this character, a megalomaniac searching for El Dorado, "the lost city of gold" in the Amazon rainforest.

Unfortunately for the two Spanish women and a troop of 20 men under his command, this protagonist does not fare well. At the end of this epic film, Kinski's crazed character finds himself alone and adrift on a raft in the middle of the Amazon River. The women, together with his men, have been killed by the natives, or fallen ill in the Amazon rainforest. In the end, Aquirre goes round in circles alone, with only a crew of 30 monkeys to keep him company on his makeshift raft.

The lesson of the film seems to be: The Indians are coming, and they are coming for you! It helps to know your math, whether you are a general at the Little Big Horn, a fictional conquistador, or the president in a turbulent White House. General Custer suffered from this malady, and it did not end well.

Lew Church is coordinator of the Portland Gray Panthers and is founding publisher and editor of two Portland State University papers, the PSU Rearguard and PSU Agitator.

Has Nation Lost All Sense of Decency and Justice?

Congress keeps throwing money to the wealthy

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."



These words are from President Franklin Roosevelt's second inaugural address given Jan. 20, 1937. The President was speaking to a nation crawling out of the Great Depression. Progress had been made but President Roosevelt knew a great nation was still capable of so much more.

We are facing another test of our moral progress today -- and we are failing.

U.S. Census Bureau figures for 2017 released this month show nearly 1 in 5 children in America still lives in poverty making them the poorest age group in our country. Almost one-third of the 39.7 million poor people in the United States are children. While the data show a slight reduction in child poverty in 2017 compared to 2016, the number of poor children -- 12.8 million, 17.5 percent of all children -- remains indecently high. And though unemployment numbers continue to fall, these gains have not kept families and children

out of poverty. More than 70 percent of poor children come from working families who often face low and stagnant wages.

The fact that nearly 1 in 5 children in America lives in poverty is morally and practically unacceptable and economically costly. That our youngest children are the poorest group of children during their years of greatest brain development is a shameful indictment of our values and our common sense given our very wealthy nation's failure to invest in our vulnerable young.

More than 1 in 5 children under six are poor in 20 states and the District of Columbia. More than two-thirds of poor children are children of color who will soon be a majority of our child population responsible for supporting our increasingly aging population into the future. Only five states have black child poverty rates under 20 percent.

How shockingly wrong-headed, immoral and costly it is that as 12.8 million children are struggle to learn while growing up in poverty, the Trump Administration and Republican-controlled Congress propose to throw money at non-needy millionaires and billionaires. In 2017 the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act gave massive tax cuts to billionaires, millionaires and powerful corporations at the expense of the majority of taxpayers and children at a cost of \$1.9 trillion over the next 11 years. To fill this huge deficit hole, the Trump Adminis-

tration and Republican leaders in Congress have threatened cuts to critical investments in child health, nutrition, housing and education.

Over the past few days, House Republicans introduced their Tax Plan 2.0 that would again reward the wealthy and continue to increase already indefensible inequality. If enacted it would permanently extend the 2017 tax law's individual provisions slated to expire after 2025 that benefit the top one percent of households twice as much as those in the bottom 60 percent.

Initial estimates indicate Tax Plan 2.0 would add around \$3 trillion more to the originally projected \$1.9 trillion deficit in the first 10 years the individual provisions become permanent.

And with significantly higher projected deficits, the threat remains that the Trump White House will continue to propose debilitating cuts and starve programs poor children and their families desperately need to buy groceries, see a doctor and find a safe affordable place to live. All of this in order to pay for huge tax breaks for wealthy corporations and individuals. Has our nation completely lost all sense of decency and justice?

Our babies' survival needs should trump billionaires' and millionaires' greed. Our children's present and future lives are too valuable to let these profoundly unjust practices continue. This new Tax Plan 2.0 and any additional cuts to key survival programs

must be rejected. And every single person in America needs to speak out and mount a campaign to end child poverty now.

The recent Census Bureau report shows how key investments can help end child and family poverty. We must provide jobs and decent wages and support investments in child and family basic needs.

In 2017, millions of children were lifted above the poverty line by the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other refundable credits (4.5 million), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (1.5 million), the National School Lunch Program (722,000), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (156,000), housing subsidies (897,000), the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program (472,000), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and general assistance (296,000).

We can and must provide enough for our young who have too little instead of padding the pockets of millionaires and billionaires who have far more than their fair share of public welfare. No child in our nation should live in poverty. Shielding children from the lifelong consequences of poverty will improve child lives now and reduce future child poverty. We have all the resources and know how to end child poverty and cannot wait. Our children's and nation's future depend on acting right now.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.