

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

OP-ED: BRIAN J. HUNHOFF

Go ahead, take closed government personally

Don't take it personally? That's usually good advice, but today we urge the opposite reaction to government bodies operating in the shadows, purposely avoiding public scrutiny and genuine transparency.

Take all of this personally because it directly affects the quality and scope of government information you get from the press. Wouldn't it be great if more people understood a reporter's exclusion from a meeting also excludes them, the general public, from learning details that are being hidden?

Wouldn't it be great to see people everywhere show that kind of passion and unity in the fight for freedom of information and the battle against government secrecy? With apologies to J.R.R. Tolkien, that speech might go something like this:

FACTS & OPINIONS

Go figure 50

South Carolina delegates are who Donald Trump could lose if he reneges on his pledge to back the eventual Republican nominee.

The poll

- This week's question: Should the Republican Party: Give the presidential nomination to Donald Trump if he's close on the first ballot and rally behind him?

Vote by 10 a.m. Tuesday @ Hampshire Review.com

Last week's question

- What kind of gardener are you? 33 votes cast: 7 Huge garden with all vegetables, 9 Raised beds with our favorite veggies, 7 Just a few containers with tomatoes, 10 I don't fool with a garden

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Did you know?

Sixty-five years ago Friday, on April 8, 1951, a military C-47 transport plane carrying 21 airmen crashed near Little Sandy Creek, north of Charleston.

FYI

Opinions expressed by columnists and letter writers are their own. Our publication of them does not mean that the Review agrees with the opinion expressed.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are typed as submitted. No changes are made to sentence structure or grammar.

Article was anti-Catholic

Editor: Your article Abuse News Saddens Parishioners: The Hampshire Review has jumped on the 'Catholic Bashing' bandwagon and shamefully, during Easter Holy Week. The front page teaser implies that Our Lady of Grace, Romney is somehow involved in the abuse scandal which it is not.

This abuse action was 'unforgivable' is not consistent with Biblical, Catholic, nor Pope Francis's Year of Mercy teaching. Unforgiveness itself is a dire sin. We hate the sin, but (as Christ) love the sinner.

The Problem with Trump? Godlessness.

Editor: I was excited when Donald Trump announced he was running for President because I knew he would shake things up. But as I have watched him run, it has become more and more obvious that we cannot risk making him the leader of the free world - the man with his "finger on the button."

A plan for Iraq? Part II

[Resurrected writings, Nr. 13. As originally published, last week's piece and the column following are linked. Together they are too long for a single column in this slot, thus this deception that I'm creative enough to continue cranking this stuff out, week after week.

do it without civilian casualties of significance; and we can do it with few strike force casualties."

The morally bankrupt citizens willing to ignore the unconstitutional behavior of this president, who should have been sent to bed without supper, early on - those who rushed to allow him, who has convincingly demonstrated a total lack of mature and/or moral judgement, to make this call - those family-room hawks who fawningly voice a chorus of "Yea, verily," blindly responding to Saddam Hussein's demented intransigence with a terrible and swift sword - are in serious, dangerous denial.

Military and CIA leaders and analysts acknowledge that we cannot "take out" all of Saddam's weapons, cannot remove the threat (lie No. 1). What will happen to our strike forces, our allies and other neighbors whose sympathies are deemed consistent with US aims, even Saddam's own internal opposition, as a result of the remaining un-destroyed weapons? The operative phrase here is the current darling of babble-speak talk-show skills: "mass destruc-



Bob FLANAGAN

BITS AND PIECES

tion." Lie No. 2. There will not be, has not ever been in the annals of military endeavor, what the administration is touting as a "surgical strike." You want surgical, invoke your HMO coverage. Don't expect it from the military; they're not in the surgical business. You do war, you make death and destruction Big Time!

a wasteland, in both World War Once and Twice, by both belligerents avoiding, yadda, yadda ... Somewhere in the 30-60 million count, according to which deviner you believe.

Lie No. 4. Few casualties among American military personnel is a couple of magnitudes too many for my taste, and for the serving members of our Armed Forces who might be one of the few. Slick Willie thinks that's OK, for he won't be among them. Remember his agenda/record? Perhaps we as a nation are willing to shoulder the burdens so artfully down-played in administration phraseology. So what if "surgical" means taking out hospitals and schools, with their attendant civilians, children and innocents, miles from legitimate targets (you might or might not get pilots to acknowledge this tawdry bit of realism, but infantrymen and Intel people who walk the walk behind the bomb patterns will confirm that it's the more likely of two possible scenarios: surgical, or do-able).

on someone's sanitized casualty lists.

Our first obligation as a nation is to make sure we know the reason for such irreversible acts of malice. I won't even mention that old saw about "... those who fail to learn from history ..." but rather, raise the question "How many times do we have to watch this repetitious horse opera before we start pelting the stage and players with odoriferous vegetables?"

man Colosseum public mindset, I don't fault the Bush White House for their misconception. Some players, it is now obvious, took excessive zeal to a dangerous height.

But following many years working in the world of military intelligence, I easily recognize the difficulty in making such critical assessments on what is flawed or inconclusive intelligence. Intel is not a game of black-and-white; that world is a mélange of infinite shades of gray. It is rare in history to have found absolute proof of enemy intent, existing plans for the future. Intel people work on the best amalgamation of facts, broad knowledge, history, human behavior patterns, suspicions, mathematical probability, experience and guesswork.