

# Opinions & Commentary

## When Will Democratic Caucuses Be?

To The Editor:

There were about 75 column inches of various sizes in the March 7 paper about the presidential preference election. Monte Miller did a very good job of covering it from almost every angle . . . especially the part

about what happens to votes for candidates who have dropped out, votes from absentees, and people who vote for those candidates.

He mentions the Democratic congressional county caucuses, but never says where or when

those are held. I'm not a party operative, but as someone who voted absentee before my candidate suspended, that would have been good information to have had.

Jo Schaper Pacific



## Governments Coordinating to Handle Coronavirus

Coronavirus is obviously a huge topic in the news, so I wanted to let my constituents know that the state and federal governments are taking this situation seriously. Recently, I was briefed on the state's readiness, and I can say that I have a great deal of confidence in the governor and the team he has in place to deal with coronavirus.

The governor has directed the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to coordinate with federal efforts that are being headed up by the vice president.

DHSS has been taking steps to prepare for coronavirus since Jan. 27, and the governor began receiving updates shortly after.

Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new virus strain. At the moment, it is hard to know exactly what to expect, but

there are some things we know about coronavirus. According to DHSS, COVID-19 spreads like the flu and may be spread by coughing, sneezing, personal contact and by touch. The severity of coronavirus can range from mild, cold-like symptoms to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization.

It is important to note that coronavirus, like normal influenza, seems particularly dangerous for the elderly and for people with pre-existing respiratory problems. Currently, there are no vaccines for this virus strain, and treatment options are limited. DHSS believes most people with mild coronavirus will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids and resting. Some cases that develop pneumonia as a result of coronavirus may require medical care or hospitalization.

According to DHSS,

prevention methods to avoid coronavirus include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid close contact with others
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces

More information about coronavirus, its spread, information for health care providers and the government's response can be found on DHSS' website.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (573) 751-3678 or by email at dave.schatz@senate.mo.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

## Nukes: The Unmentionable Election Issue

By Mel Gurtov

One of these days, national security policy will get a few minutes of campaign debate time. And when that day occurs, perhaps — just perhaps — attention will turn to a matter of some urgency: the continuing threat posed by nuclear weapons.

As both the US and Russia pursue MADness (mutually assured destruction) with steep investments in nuclear weapons, they use the same distorted logic to justify them that has been used throughout the nuclear age.

The fundamental issue with nuclear weapons at this moment is that, as happened in the Reagan era, a U.S. administration is playing with the idea of having usable nukes for a variety of conflicts, non-nuclear as well as nuclear. This comes as no surprise, since the administration's Nuclear Posture Review in 2018 previewed just such a strategy.

Among the specific purposes of nuclear weapons, the NPR states, are to hedge against the potential rapid growth or emergence of nuclear and non-nuclear strategic threats, including chemical, biological, cyber, and large-scale conventional aggression. . . . the United States will enhance the flexibility and range of its tailored deterrence options. . . . Expanding flexible U.S. nuclear options now, to include low-yield options, is important for the preservation of credible deterrence against regional aggression.

Accordingly, Trump's defense department announced last month that a new, "low-yield" nuclear warhead for submarines will be deployed, supposedly

in order to make deterrence of a nuclear attack more credible.

It is not as though the U.S.'s ability to deter attack has been weakened. Its current stock of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles remains more than adequate to deter any adversary. The total U.S. nuclear weapon inventory is about 5,800 warheads, of which about 1,750 are deployed — about 900 on submarines, which are invulnerable, and 400 on land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. The remaining 2,000 or so warheads are stored at more than 20 sites in the U.S. and Europe. As for launchers, under Trump new generations of strategic bombers, ballistic missile submarines, and missiles are in research or production. Overkill, in short, has acquired a new life.

### Needless, Destabilizing

The history of planning for nuclear weapons tells us that the introduction of a new weapon is inherently destabilizing; it makes actual use more rather than less likely, because it introduces greater uncertainty than before about the other side's intentions. Nuclear war due to a miscalculation, accidental use, or false alarm becomes an increased possibility, and deterrence becomes more a matter of guesswork than ever. The idea that a Russian leader, for example, would believe the United States would not respond if it initiated use of a "low-yield" nuclear weapon rather than some blockbuster is absurd.

As a group of former officials, including Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense William

Perry, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2019:

We write to respectfully request that Congress reject the Trump administration's request for new, more usable, "low-yield" nuclear warheads for Trident [submarine] missiles. There is no need for such weapons and building them would make the United States less safe. These so-called "low-yield" weapons are a gateway to nuclear catastrophe and should not be pursued.

Presidential candidates should also be drawing attention to the costs of modernizing the nuclear arsenal. As three experienced analysts point out, the defense department's "projected expenditures on nuclear weapons for the period 2025-34 are at a level that was exceeded only twice during the Cold War," meaning over \$400 billion (Physics Today, April 2018). The major corporations that produce the weapons benefit from enormous investments.

According to one report from PAX, a Netherlands peace group:

When examining the top companies involved in the nuclear weapon industry, we found over 748 billion USD invested in these companies by 325 financial institutions between January 2017 and January 2019. This reflects investments in the top 18 nuclear weapon producing companies.

In a word, nuclear weapons are big business, and so long as "deterrence" dominates discussion, companies that invest in them will always thrive.

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## Notebook

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in that manner on cases before the court.

Schumer faced immediate criticism for his remarks, even from some Democrats. Chief Justice John Roberts and the court issued this statement: "Justices know that criticism comes with the territory, but threatening statements of this sort from the highest levels of government are not only inappropriate, they are dangerous. All members of the court will continue to do their job, without fear or favor, from whatever quarter."

The statements were

unbecoming from the minority leader in the Senate.

Schumer lost little time in backing away from his remarks. He denied he was making a threat and said he shouldn't have used the words he did. Schumer said he was from Brooklyn and "we speak in strong language." That's a grade school response!

The American Bar Association said the legal organization was "deeply troubled" by Schumer's remarks.

Schumer was defended by several top Democrats.

The president also has

criticized members of the court, especially Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. President Trump said the two justices should recuse themselves from any cases involving him because of alleged bias.

The attack mode practices by some politicians need to be toned down. They belittle them personally and are unbecoming for the public office they hold.

We'd like to become optimistic about civility prevailing in politics and in dealing with each other but being a realist, we don't see it happening.

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legislators reaching into their own pockets to pay for the service. That means that in order for government to provide medical services to someone who cannot afford it, it must use intimidation, threats and coercion to take the earnings of another American to provide that service.

Let's apply this bogus concept of rights to my right to speak and travel freely. In the case of my right to free speech, it might impose obligations on others to supply me with an auditorium, microphone and audience. It may require newspapers or television stations to allow me to use their property to express my views.

My right to travel freely might require that others provide me with resources to purchase airplane tickets and hotel accommodations. What if I were to demand that others make sacrifices so that I can exercise my free speech and travel rights, I suspect that most Americans would say, "Williams, you have rights to free speech and you have a right to travel freely, but I'm not obligated to pay for them!"

A moral vision of rights does not mean that we should not help our fellow man in need. It means that helping with health care needs to be voluntary (i.e., free market

decisions or voluntary donations to charities that provide health care.) The government's role in health care is to protect this individual right to choose. As Sen. Rand Paul was brave enough to say, "The basic assumption that you have a right to get something from somebody else means you have to endorse the concept of theft."

Statists go further to claim that people have a "right" to housing, to a job, to an education, to an affordable wage. These so-called rights impose burdens on others in the form of involuntary servitude. If one person has a right to something he did not earn, it means that another person does not have a right to something he did earn.

The provision by the U.S. Congress of a so-called right to health care should offend any sense of moral decency. If you're a Christian or a Jew, you should be against the notion of one American living at the expense of another. When God gave Moses the Eighth Commandment — "Thou shalt not steal" — I am sure that He did not mean, "Thou shalt not steal — unless there is a majority vote in the U.S. Congress."

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To find out more about Williams, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in his war to crush Houthis rebels who had ousted Riyadh's resident puppet in Yemen.

And what has the West reaped from our Mideast wars?

In Syria and Yemen, we have helped to create two of the world's greatest human rights disasters. In Libya, we have a new civil war. In Iraq, we now battle Iran for influence inside a nation we "liberated" in 2003

In Afghanistan, we have concluded a deal with our enemy of two decades, the Taliban, that will enable us to pull our 12,000 troops out of the country in 14 months and let our Afghan allies work it out, or fight it out, with the Taliban. America is washing its hands of its longest war.

In five wars over 20 years, we lost 7,000 soldiers with some 40,000 wounded. We plunged the wealth of an empire into these wars.

And what did these wars produce for the people we went to aid and uplift, besides hundreds of thousands of dead Afghans and Arabs and

millions of people uprooted from their homes and driven into exile?

Now, Europe is being admonished by the FT that, having done its duty by plunging into the Mideast, the continent has a new moral duty to take in the refugees the wars created, for decades to come.

But if the EU opens its doors to an endless stream of Africans and Arabs, where is the evidence that European nations will accept and assimilate them?

Will these migrants and asylum seekers become good Europeans? Or will they create in the great cities of Europe enclaves that replicate the conditions in the African and Middle East countries whence they came?

The history of the last half millennium tells the story of the rise and fall of a civilization.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Spain, Britain, France and Portugal, and then Belgium, Italy, Germany and America, all believing in the superiority of their civilization,

went out into the world to create empires to uplift and rule what Rudyard Kipling derisively called "the lesser breeds without the law."

After two world wars, the rulers of these empires embraced a liberalism that now proclaimed the equality of all peoples, races, creeds, cultures and civilizations. This egalitarian ideology mandated the dismantling of empires and colonies as the reactionary relics of a benighted time.

Now the peoples of the new nations, dissatisfied with what their liberated lands and rulers have produced, have decided to come to Europe to enjoy in the West what they cannot replicate at home. And liberalism, the ideology of Western suicide, dictates to Europe that it take them in — for decades to come.

The colonizers of yesterday are becoming the colonized of tomorrow. Is this how the West ends?

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