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Trump's quagmire could lead to nation's disaster

BY JOHN D. STEMPEL

Recent weeks have brought President Donald Trump ever deeper into a quagmire of problems. His bombardment of Syria and Afghanistan and his looming confrontation with North Korea have stretched America's military capabilities and American anxiety to the limit.

The good news is that Trump's political strategist Steve Bannon is well on his way out and Trump decided to keep the Export-Import Bank open, and said he would not label China a currency manipulator after meeting with the Chinese President at Mar-a-lago.

The real danger at this point is that he may think he can do anything with the military — a shift from his earlier view that the military was a “disaster.” The North Korean issue is a hard case in point. North Korean leader Kim has bluntly announced they are ready for war. Whatever the Chinese may have promised Trump, it may not be enough to stop hostilities of some kind from breaking out and putting American and South Korean forces in a real bind.

You can also be sure fighting of various kinds will continue in the Syria/Iraq/Iran area. The “Mother of all bombs” dropped recently on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border will not do the trick and may provoke as much as frighten.

Perhaps the most potential, dramatic and tough issues will be when and whether the FBI and CIA release their findings on Russian influence in the Trump camp. From what I have gathered from open sources and friends in Washington, there is fire, not just smoke, behind the charges that Carter Page, perhaps Jared Kushner, and a couple of others who may have been involved in what is very close to, if not actually, high treason.

Trump's ability to blow off anything he does not want to hear does not serve him well. His distance from Bannon and his cozying up to other major business leaders has delighted traditional Republicans, but his administration is still weak.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has done little or nothing except sound fatherly with a deep voice, and though he now has a deputy secretary, he has also done nothing to staff the State Department properly. The longer this goes on, the sadder the state of our foreign relations will become, and the more temptation there will be to resort to force or have it forced upon us.

Given the president's wild mood and temperament swings, it is prudent to at least begin to consider his removal before we encounter a preventable disaster, through our own or someone else's mistakes.

Perhaps a more pointed epigraph for our time might be, "It is not enough to seek the truth — we must be willing to find it." (Terah Cox)

And then we must act upon it. To fail is to court national disaster.

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