THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT

The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

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Inside Lugar's national sales tax proposal:

'I think this is what I want to talk about,' the senator told his staff

Dick Lugar's campaign staff gathered with him one morning in February and the agenda called for the senator to articulate his domestic agenda.

The senator's staff noted his efforts on behalf of the New York City and Chrysler bailouts of the late 1970s as proof of his successful approach to uniquely American problems.

Lugar responded by pulling out a thick file folder dating back five years. Its topic? The elimination of income taxes and the Internal Revenue Service.

"I think this is what I want to talk about," Lugar told his campaign staff.

It took nearly seven weeks of research to get a plan, code named "Liberty," ready for Lugar to unveil at the Cato Institute in Washington on April 5. It would establish a flat 17-percent national retail sales tax and eliminate all federal individual and corporate income taxes as well as capital gains and estate taxes. It would close loopholes that allow for $150 billion in uncollected taxes annually.

This Tuesday, Lugar met with Boston University's Laurence Kotlikoff, another champion of the issue. There would be a speech before the New England Council at noon Tuesday, and then a similar speech at 8 a.m. Wednesday before the Chicago Executive Club at the Swiss Hotel.

Lugar's presidential campaign is operating with a brain trust of Mitch Daniels and Mark Lubbers in Indianapolis, along with Mark Helmke, Marty Morris and Jeff Bergner in Washington. The tax proposal involved much staff research on Lugar's folder of leads, and daily phone conversations among the brain trust members.

Last Saturday, Lugar went to his Capitol hideaway, sat down

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"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"The pace has been like taking a sip out of a gushing fire hydrant...."

- U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer, on the Republican's "Contract With America," to Michigan City News-Dispatch

INSIDE FEATURES

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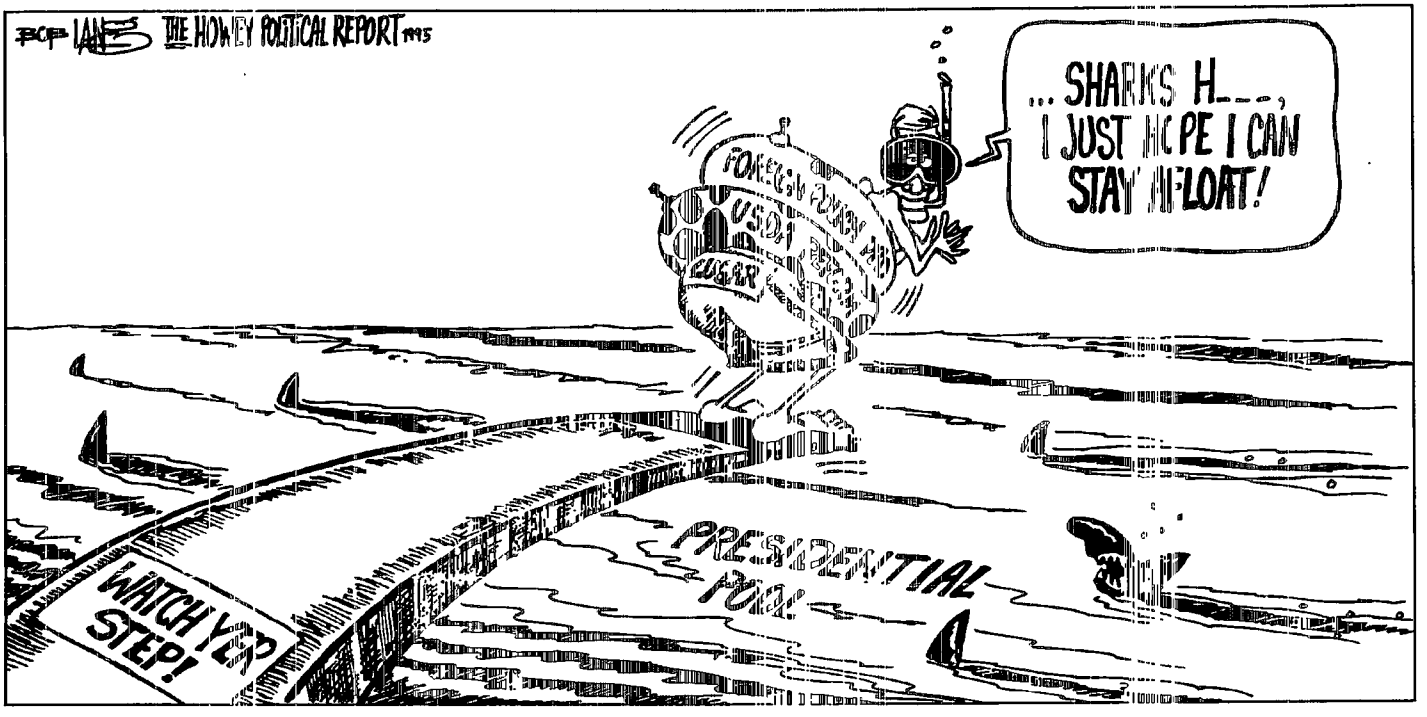

HUMOR MILL

Wendellisms

by Wendell Trogdon
Indianapolis News

Dick Lugar wants to scrap the federal income tax for a national sales tax....which will allow you to start the day by paying $1.25 for a 99-cent breakfast biscuit.

The president can't win. He goes on a whirlwind tour of the country and new blue M&Ms get more attention.

■ ■ ■

Devil's Dictionary, by Ambrose Bierce

President, *n.* The leading figure in a small group of men of whom - and of whom only - it is positively known that immense numbers of their countrymen did not want any of them for president.

'Contract' a hit with pols and the press

You'd expect House Republicans to laud the "Contract With America" and they did.

U.S. Rep. John Hostettler called the first 100 days "a good first step," adding, "It's important to establish a pattern of doing what we say we'll do." U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer noted that voters "were tired of the status quo in Washington and wanted change. While many political pundits and members of the national media predicted failure for our ambitious reform agenda, we proved them wrong." And U.S. Rep. David McIntosh told Brian Francisco of the Muncie Star that the first 100 days "shows that politicans can keep their word."

There was even begrudging praise from U.S. Reps. Lee Hamilton (see pages 6 and 7) and Tim Roemer. "It would have been a major success if Congress had debated two or three of these bills in a whole session," Roemer told Paul Donsky of the Michigan City News-Dispatch.

The Hoosier press, for the most part, seemed impressed with the work Congress had done. Here's a sampling from editorial pages from around the state:

■ Shelbyville News - Speaker Newt Gingrich has every right to crow since the Contract was his project, and most certainly he will. Humility is hardly one of his virtues. More was at stake than political rhetoric. We found out that promises can be made and gridlock can be shattered if unflappable leadership rallies the House around common goals that are good for the country.

■ Bloomington Herald-Times - Completion of the Republican Contract With America in just 93 days was an extraordinary exhibition of political acumen and party discipline. That it could be accomplished in the hostile environment of Washington, where liberalism is pervasive and big government the wellspring from which so much employment flows, makes it that much more remarkable.

■ Indianapolis Star - Not only has the House drastically altered the national agenda, but it may have restored accountability to the U.S. political system.

Will all this mean happy days are here again for the GOP. David L. Hasse of the Indianapolis News notes that a New York Times/CBS poll showed that 47 percent of Americans were "mostly disappointed" with the first 100 days. "Tough audience," Haase wrote. "Stay tuned for the second 100."

Upset brewing in Michigan City primary

HORSE RACE

One of last fall's favorite features was the Horse Race, where HPR was able to predict three GOP congressional victories and a takeover in the Indiana House. Well, Anderson isn't the only place where the horses are running this spring. HPR will keep you up to speed on some dandy mayoral races. This week, we concentrate on the southern rim of Lake Michigan, where victory in the Democratic primary is tantamount to election, as well as some interesting races brewing on the Republican side. The Horse Race key is "safe" for candidates you can bet your money on; "leaning" for those who have an apparent edge; and "toss-up," which means we don't know what in the hell will happen.

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MICHIGAN CITY

Behler v. Bergerson (D) - Mayor Robert Behler is in big trouble. Councilwoman Sheila Bergerson is pressing him on an array of fronts, from lack of involvement in the city's probationary schools, to the fact that he hid a feeler to relocate from a medical waste recycling company. The school issue may be a reincarnation of Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith's involvement in city schools. Behler said his involvement is through "support and participation" in a school system where eight of 16 schools are on probation. Bergerson supports finding ways for City Hall to become "more involved" in city schools. LEANING BERGERSON

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EAST CHICAGO

Pastrick v. Stiglich (D) - Former Sheriff Stephen Stiglich is working hard, but look for Mayor Robert Pastrick to pull out yet another term in this blood feud here in the People's Republic of East Chicago. LEANING PASTRICK

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GARY

Graddock v. Rogers (D) - With endorsements by State Rep. Charlie Brown and former Mayor Richard Hatcher, city political leaders seem to be making a bigger splash than Graddock is himself. Sen. Earline Rogers is experiencing "Senate drag." LEANING GRADDOCK

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FORT WAYNE:

Helmke v. Widmann (R) - The day before filing, Helmke looked like a shoo-in for not only renomination, but re-election. But hold on to your hats. Primary opponent John Widmann is phone banking and hoping that newly annexed Repubs will vote "anybody but Paul." LEANING HELMKE

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TICKER TAPE

Dan Quayle is still not running for anything.

Sen. Richard Lugar tells **Steve Jackson** of the *Kokomo Tribune*, "Every waking hour not spent in the Senate - I'm trying to fulfill every obligation there - is spent on the campaign."

Lugar has named **Lesley N. Reser** as his state director, replacing **Kevin Shaw Kellems**, who is now on the presidential campaign staff in Indianapolis. Reser, a DePauw graduate, was director of Lugar's Senate campaigns for the past four years.

Legislative observers were calling **State Rep. Gary Cook's** tearful exit from the House last Tuesday as an unprecedented show of emotion in the last 30 years. But it was only two years ago that freshman **Sen. Glenn Howard** voted against the budget, creating a furor within the Black Caucus. Said one observer, "The black caucus was on him like blood on a cut." During a re-vote, Howard switched

Cook, with the help of **State Rep. Craig Fry**, was followed out of the chamber by House **Majority Leader Brian Bosma**, who told him, "It's OK Gary."

Prof. Robert Ferrell of Indiana University is upset by reports that **President Harry Truman** drank at a Howard Johnson's, swore frequently and gossiped about Dwight Eisenhower's infidelities. Not true, said Ferrell, "I'm really irritated."

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TICKER TAPE

U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer has introduced a bill giving governors, mayors and other local officials power to halt the dumping of out-of-state waste. (**Michael Kilian**, *Chicago Tribune*). He writes, "In other words, Illinois garbage go home - and stay there." Buyer notes that of the 1 million to 1.5 million tons of out-of-state trash annually, nearly all of it is dumped in Buyer's 5th CD.

The *Evansville Courier's* **Doug Sword** in a huge front page Sunday story on **U.S. Rep. John Hostettler** quotes **U.S. Rep. Michael Flanagan** (the guy who upset Rosty) on Hostettler: "There isn't a crass, self-serving bone in his body." The two have become good friends. Writes Sword, "They're a strange pair, though, the straight-laced Hoosier and the gregarious, smoking, abrupt, Chicagoan."

Fourth Congressional District Democrats are awaiting signals from former Congresswoman **Jill Long** on whether she will position herself to be **Frank O'Bannon's** running mate or seek a rematch with **U.S. Rep. Mark Souder**. Long is teaching at Harvard this spring.

Rebecca Coudret of the *Evansville Courier* writes that since Jan. 16 "The Bob and Tom Show" is "changing the face of morning radio in Evansville - and Fort Wayne and South Bend as well." She quotes one new listener as saying, "They get away with a lot of things the stations in Evansville don't get away with - or don't even try."

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Senate GOP's ditching of prevailing wage keeps O'Bannon off pedestal

INDIANAPOLIS - Minutes after Mike McDaniel was elected state Republican Chairman last February, HPR asked him if he would follow the lead of his predecessor, Al Hubbard, in helping define issues in the Indiana General Assembly.

"I'm not going to meddle in specific legislation," McDaniel answered. "We have a lot of capable people who can sort that out themselves."

Hmmmmm.

Capable? As Sam Turpin was with the school funding formula? As Bob Garton was on the 1st District recount? As Paul Mannweiler was on redistricting?

Inject the 1996 gubernatorial race into the mix and you had on Tuesday the Indiana Senate coming so close to hoisting Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon on a pedestal. The deal was the vote on reforming prevailing wage. Many observers saw it coming down to a 25-25 deadlock, forcing O'Bannon to cast the tie-breaker.

O'Bannon's dilemma was supposed to be this: vote no and while he becomes the champion of revitalized labor, he antagonizes big business which has helped him raise around $1 million for his gubernatorial campaign thus far. Vote yes and he scuttles the property tax reform and becomes the enemy of the common man.

When Sen. Pat Miller left the chamber to allow a 25-24 defeat of the bill, it became evident that there was yet another huge, embarrasing political miscalculation. "For awhile, the Republicans thought he would be between a rock and a hard place," said O'Bannon strategist Bill Schreiber.

The problem for Republicans was that there were a number of other bills where property tax controls could be resurrected. When Miller walked, Schreiber deadpanned, "They figured they didn't want to make him a hero."

O'Bannon's rocks and hard places (no, not the heads of GOP leadership) are still present. Tort reform is another potential tie-breaker where O'Bannon might find himself antagonizing key constituencies.

Of all Indiana PACs, the Law PAC ranked fifth in campaign contributions with $154,000 in 1992, ranking only behind the Indiana PAC for Education ($560,000), Greater Indianapolis Republican Committe ($437,000), the Realtors ($243,000) and the Indiana Business PAC ($212,000). But lawyer lobbyist Ed Treacy also lobbies for the chiropractors, another big PAC donor.

Schreiber isn't fretting about a tort tie-breaker. "When you have a 12-vote majority in each chamber, it reminds me of that Grateful Dead line - 'think it through with me.'" Schreiber said. "I'd be very surprised if it came to that in the Senate. I've talked to the trial lawyers and they thought the House was their best opportunity. I would be surprised if it was real close in the Senate."

Schreiber, like most of the Statehouse press corps, is both amused and appalled at the GOP's "mandate" mishandling. "These solid Republican caucuses have been broken internally rather than externally by us," Schreiber said. "I'd like to take credit."

■ GUBERNATORIAL NOTES: Gordon Durnil took a page out of Bob Orr's first gubernatorial campaign. Back in 1979, Orr ran TV ads that promptly boosted his name ID. On April 5, Hoosiers for Pat Rooney did the same thing with two 30-second commercials and another pair of 60-second ads. Both will run in all state media markets for two weeks. "It is time to start telling Hoosiers more about Pat Rooney," Durnil said

■ Rooney will formally announce his gubernatorial candidacy on April 17.

■ George Witwer is working on a massive voter registration drive. The goal is to add 180,000 names to the voter roles.

■ Bill Schreiber sees Rooney's early TV campaign as "taking advantage of the decision period of Dan Quayle." The O'Bannon camp is still anticipating the Republican nominee to be either Quayle or Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith.

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Ellen Goodman, Boston Globe - In sheer numbers, divorce is the chief culprit in the breakup of the family and the deteroriating well-being of children. And we have indeed been, as the report says, "curiously silent on the subject of marriage." In an era when every other marriage ends, the extent of divorce has served to stifle us. Even Dan Quayle, in a second "Murphy Brown" speech last fall, insisted, "I'm not talking about a situation where there is a divorce...." His own grandmother was divorced, he demurred, as were half of his cousins. Not to mention an entire roster of "pro-family" Republican leaders from Gramm to Dole to Gingrich. We're also silent because divorce strikes at the central conflict between two sets of American values. One is the value we place on individual freedom, on striking out and starting over, on the pursuit of happiness. The other is the value we place on commitment, building communities, and stable families.

Mary Dieter, Louisville Courier-Journal - If there were logic or consistency in the Senate Republicans' decision to sink "the boat in the moat," perhaps the Southern Indiana people who see the proposal's merits could better accept that fate. But there is neither, and so the likelihood that the boat won't float is hard to swallow. Despite its conservatism, the House did not get hung up on peripheral issues or those that have already been decided - namely, whether Indiana should have legalized gambling. Not so in the Senate, where you'd have thought proponents had asked for Indiana to become the gambling mecca of the western world, with legalized organized crime running it. So the horse is out of the barn, the genie is out of the bottle. It's about time that senators knock off their denial, their hypocricy and their self-righteous moral objection to the reality that they created.

Dick Robinson, Terre Haute Tribune-Star - The big surprise is what lawmakers call property tax relief with a bill that can't lower taxes. Property taxes have risen every year since 1981, and those who watched it happen believe they know how to control the tax. The pending control bills won't stop growth, but don't be surprised to find property tax relief at the top of this year's list of lawmaker accomplishments.

Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette - The House passed a $500-a-child tax credit as part of its Contract With America tax package, and Sen. Dan Coats is stumping for the idea in the Senate. It's being made out to be the savior of the failing American family, but the $500-a-child tax credit is a gimmick at best and self-defeating at worst. It just won't be the thing that A.) lets one parent in a two-parent family stay home and be a full-time parent or B.) pay a family's health insurance. In fact, tax credits cost money - tax money - and add to the national debt. The serious and negative consequences of ballooning the deficit far outweigh the benefits most families would get from the tax credit.

Jack Powers, South Bend Tribune - We have become a society drunk on money. It is no longer a simple necessity but a consuming passion, a hang-up, an addiction. Is this reading too much into what some might dismiss as a baseball squabble? Perhaps. But if The Game is in fact a metaphor of life, we are in serious trouble. We have lost our compass and our charts. We seem less and less capable of sensing that delicate balance between the good profit and the good life. That balance is always fragile.

Kevin Leininger, Fort Wayne News-Sentinel - The candidate who has spoken the most honestly and passionately about the city's most important issue is the likely Democratic candidate for mayor: Wayne Township Trustee Tom Essex. The issue? Crime, of course. I have no doubt that (Mayor Paul) Helmke is deeply concerned about the issue. The problem is that he doesn't always seem concerned. Campaign strategy or not, Essex is far more eager to acknowledge the fear that gnaws at people living in certain parts of town - fear that keeps other people from visiting, working or shopping in those areas.

TICKER TAPE

How intense is the war getting over the prevailing wage reform? A full page ad ran in the *Brazil Times* this week aimed at **State Sen. Richard Bray**. Accompanied by a photo of Bray, the ad states, "Your help is needed on HB 1008." The ad was paid for by a group called "Taxpayers Yes" maintaining the group represents 120,000 farmers, small businessmen and working families.

Curious that House Ways and Means **Chairman Sam Turpin,** running with the "no new taxes" party, would sponsor HB 1649, which would impose a 1 percent food and beverage tax on his own constituents in Plainfield and Brownsburg. The bill reads that the tax would be used to finance a minor league sports facility.

Brian Howey's political column is now running in 26 Indiana newspapers with the addition of The Kokomo Herald, a Democratic weekly newspaper in Howard County.

Network Indiana's **Mike Pence Show** finished its first year of broadcasting on April 11. Pence now boasts 17 radio affiliates, including WXLW 950 AM in Indianapolis, WAOV-AM in Vincennes and WTCJ-AM in Tell City.

Here's a tip for reporters on Indiana's north and south coasts in this, the age of the riverboat. How much money are casino interests pumping into mayoral campaigns in Michigan City, Gary, East Chicago, Hammond, Evansville and so on? Campaign finance reports will be on file on April 15.

Lee Hamilton finds 'minority' life not as wrenching as anticipated

HPR INTERVIEW

"I don't think you can judge on whether we've had a Republican revolution or not. What you have is a good start in the House...."
Lee Hamilton

"I'm looking forward to years of service...."
Lee Hamilton

Late last summer, U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton appeared before the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association and tried to energize his party. He told about speeches he had been giving to constituents, only to feel as if a "curtain dropped between me and the people I'm talking to."

He invoked the axiom that "all politics is national" and scolded Hoosier Democrats for abandoning President Clinton.

The curtain nearly dropped on Hamilton's career last Nov. 8. Had the Republicans committed money to the Louisville TV market during the final weekend, Hamilton's 52-48 percent victory might have become a huge upset.

HPR talked with Hamilton on the 100th day of the 104th Congress. He dodged questions about possibly succeeding Secretary of State Warren Christopher, congratulated the congressional Republicans, and speculated on the period between now and November 1996.

HPR: What is the status of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's retirement and you possibly being on President Clinton's short list?

Hamilton: I think Secretary Christopher is doing an excellent job. I have no indication that he is considering retirement. The president is entitled to whomever he wants as secretary of state. I think he has a lot of confidence in Secretary Christopher and I applaud the work he has done.

HPR: If that position were to open up, would you accept if offered?

Hamilton: I really don't want to speculate on that. I think any Cabinet position depends on the relationship of the appointee to the president and what kind of access, what kind of influence, what kind of personal relationship would exist. Some of those things I could answer now, many I could not. In any event, I consider it very speculative.

HPR: You've spent all but three months of your 30-year congressional career in the majority. Give us some idea about being a part of the loyal opposition

Hamilton: Well, it's quite an adjustment. I think in a nutshell, in the minority you react and in the majority you initiate. So I've had to make quite an adjustment there, although it's not been as wrenching as I thought it might be. There isn't any doubt the Republicans today control the Congress, control the agenda, and my role is to try to be constructive, but it is a reactive role. I think another role is to try to broker between the Republican majority in the House and the White House. I have good standing to accomplish that and I've worked at that.

HPR: The Republicans have brought some of the congressional reforms you had worked very diligently on and were rejected by past Democratic House leadership. Your comments on some of the reforms.

Hamilton: The Republicans deserve credit. They were able to achieve a lot of things in congressional reform we Democrats have not achieved, to my very great regret. I supported those reforms. They made staff cuts, they made cuts in the number of committees. They opened up floor procedures. They passed a law making members of Congress live under the same laws the people do. All of those are constructive, positive, and the Republicans deserve credit for it. I would go even further. I would broaden the reform agenda. I am pushing it. And there are Republicans who are receptive to it but that has to be the next step.

HPR: How much further would you go?

Hamilton: I would certainly limit the disproportionate influence of money today in the political process. I would ban gifts from lobbyists and I would try to take steps - and this is more difficult in a sense - to decrease the highly partisan rhetoric that has marked these opening months of the Congress.

HPR: Along these same lines, the first 100 days have come to an end. What is your overall assessment?

Hamilton: First of all, I think they should be congratulated - the Republicans. They

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said they were going to do something, which was to vote on all those items, and they achieved that. And all 10 points of the contract have been voted on within the 100-day period. They deserve credit for that. They've shown a remarkable discipline in achieving that and I've supported many of the bills and voted against many others. But the concepts in these on most contract items have been good. I think out of the legislation - or I should say bills - we have passed, they've been drawn quickly and need refinement. Many of the bills went through without rigorous scrutiny. I think now you'll see the Senate hold them up because of that, in part. The proposals on the contract are important, and I don't mean to denigrate them. But they are more process proposals - balanced budget amendments, line item veto, legal reform and so forth - than they are substantive. What's on the mind of my constituents are job security, good paying jobs, health care, better educational opportunities.

HPR: A number of Democrats in Indiana and across the nation are going to be watching the second 100 days to decide whether to challenge these freshman Republicans. This next sequence might hold the Gingrich revolution in the balance.

Hamilton: I don't think you can judge whether you've had a Republican revolution or not. What you have had is a good start to it in the House, but the key...look, the job of the Congress is to pass laws. We haven't done that yet. So, in a sense, the balance of the year and even beyond, the second year of the 104th Congress, will tell us whether you've had a Republican revolution or not.

HPR: Your probable 1996 opponent, State Sen. Jean Leising, has told people she believes you are voting more conservatively this session. Are you?

Hamilton: No, I don't think so. Of course the voting scores have not come out. I've never been a liberal voter. Every objective, fair study of my voting record puts me almost exactly center in the House, very moderate. I've really not seen any of the ratings. It's a little too early here. But I don't see any great change in my pattern. I just recently voted against tax cuts. I'm not sure whether that's liberal or conservative. My basic view there is that before we cut taxes, we need to cut the deficit. I want to see the budget savings in the bank first instead of passing a tax cut. My constituents say to me their taxes are too high. They are correct in that. But I also believe we have to get the deficit under control and the spending cuts in place before we start handing out tax cuts.

HPR: We spoke briefly to you just prior to your speech at the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association convention in French Lick last August and you said you weren't sure about your speech topic. You then gave a very dramatic speech - very emotional. Tell me what went into that and your pleas to the Democrats.

Hamilton: I guess what went into it was a sense that I felt even then that Democrats weren't energized about the election and that they really needed some pumping up, some firing up. That feeling of mine continued throughout the campaign and it worried me. Looking back, I should have been worried even more.

HPR: You said that you felt like a curtain was separating you from your constituents when you spoke. Do you feel that curtain lifting now?

Hamilton: I've had a lot of public meetings in recent weeks. It's a different atmosphere. The major change is one of intensity. As you move toward an election, the intensity of the voter rises. I think the voter voted for change in 1992. They elected President Clinton, did not feel they got that change, and they voted for change again in 1994. Whether or not they get the change remains to be seen. The voter continues to be not satisfied with the performance of politicians and government and wants change.

HPR: Jean Leising said she believes that you thought you had lost on Election Night 1994.

Hamilton: No, that's not correct. We never at any time thought we had lost. We were surprised by the margin. We thought we would win somewhat better. Although I knew I would not repeat the kind of margins I've had in the past, at no time on Election Night did we think we had lost.

HPR: Do you expect to run in 1996?

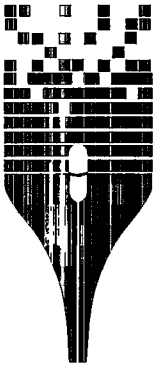
Hamilton: I am proceeding as I always have. I've really not addressed the question of running, but I'm making no change in my pattern at all. I'm looking forward to years of service.

TICKER TAPE

The Indianapolis media had a good time calling **Mayor Stephen Goldsmith** an obsessed paranoid over his security. *Indianapolis Star* columnist **Dick Cady** noted that New York **Mayor Rudolph Giuliani,** a former prosecutor like Goldsmith, lives in Gracie Mansion in the Big Apple's walking tour district. What he didn't tell you was the mayor's official residence is fenced, has a sophisticated alarm and light system, a 24-hour guard booth, police on duty at the end of the driveway, a police car with two officers on site and a police-manned backup car, metal detectors at City Hall, a locked office with an alarm system, as well as a police guard desk. Oh, and a 70-plus officer security force

Indiana newspapers gave extensive front page coverage to a pair of Democrats: the death of **President Franklin Roosevelt,** and former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's admission that the Vietnam War was a terrible mistake.

U.S. Rep. Mark Souder will be conducting 35 community meetings in the 4th CD over the Easter break.



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Muncie Evening Press
Michigan City News-Dispatch
New Castle Courier-Times
Newton County Enterprise
Peru Tribune
Shelbyville News
Sullivan Daily Times
Wabash Plain Dealer

Inside Lugar's 'Project Liberty'

from page 1

at his IBM Selectric typewriter, and pounded out the press release detailing his tax proposal. It began this way:

"Today, Dick Lugar proposed to abolish all federal income taxes and replace them with a national sales tax, representing a sweeping reform of the federal tax system aimed at balancing the federal budget...."

Two days later, CNN's Bill Schneider was calling the Lugar proposal his "Play of the Week" on the daily TV show "Inside Politics." GOP pollster Frank Luntz is calling the tax reform issue the "runaway freight train" issue of the 1996 campaign.

Lugar told Time magazine, "The money you earn is yours. You need not account for it, report it or hide it...You are no longer guilty until you prove your innocence to the IRS."

The preparation of the Lugar tax plan was another illustration of how the senator operates, much to the continual awe of his staff.

Material on his desk is separated into stacks that he speed reads through at an astounding rate.

"The senator comes up with an idea based on his constant study of issues," explained Helmke, "and then he asks his staff to begin to augment it."

That's what happened during the seven weeks between the time Lugar pulled out the file folder in February and the announcement of his income tax elimination proposal last week.

Has Lugar ever sprung an idea on his staff that, after research, was deemed impractical?

Helmke seemed stumped. A pregnant moment later, he replied, "I can't remember a time."

■ LUGAR NOTES: Time quotes Joe Slemrod, a University of Michigan economist, as saying the Lugar sales tax would have to be 25 percent to raise as much revenue as the current income tax. He also called it regressive, falling most heavily on the poor, who spend the highest share of their incomes on consumption.

■ Lugar didn't escape criticism from Time's Michael Kramer on his story "Ducks, Flips and Panders." Lugar's sin was "veering off-track" about "sending the Marines to rescue" the two Americans held by Iraq. But he seemed to miss the point, as Lugar stressed a full range of options for what he sees as Saddam Hussein's continual search for cracks in the U.S. foreign policy facade.

■ Lugar's formal campaign announcement will take place from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Wednesday, April 19 at City Market Plaza in Indianapolis. The event had orginally been planned for Monument Circle, but the ever-changing Hoosier weather made an inside event safer. Plus, City Market was rehabbed during Lugar's mayor administration and Market Square Arena was built - the first cornerstones to the revitalization of downtown Indy.

■ C-Span and CNN will show the speech live. Lugar will also appear live on CNN's "Inside Politics" show at 3 p.m.

■ Allen County Republican Chairman Steven R. Shine will emcee the event - similar to his role when Dan Quayle was vice president. He will accompany Lugar to Fort Wayne for the GOP's annual Lincoln Day Dinner beginning at 5 p.m. U.S. Rep. Mark Souder will be the keynote speaker.

■ Lugar will spend April 17-18 in Iowa prior to his announcement.

■ Lugar had dinner with former Sen. Paul Tsongas in Lowell, Mass., last week. Tsongas talked about his 1992 presidential campaign and told Lugar that "voters want a sense of convictions." Lugar and Tsongas worked together on the 1979 Chrysler bailout.

■ A straw poll taken at the Newspapers Editors Association in Dallas last week had Sen. Robert Dole at 33 percent, Sen. Phil Gramm at 17 percent and Lugar at 14.

■ The Wisconsin legislature is considering a bill that would move its 1996 presidential primary up from April 2 to March 19, the same day that primaries are conducted in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. March 19 appears to be the "make or break" date for Lugar's presidential campaign. Wisconsin would add 36 more delegates to the 193 chosen in Illinois, Ohio and Michigan.