



FEATURE: Impeachment: week in review

A weekly one paragraph summary report and analysis, followed by recaps (with links) of representative on-line articles and essays – typically 800 to 1,600 words.

Week ending 4/1/2018 (~900 words)

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Minneapolis 4/2/18 Edition – As with the previous week, there wasn’t much impeachment news in the past week bearing directly on the Mueller investigation. However, several developments – in some cases related to that investigation -- were again significant. Over the past three months the Dow Jones measure of stocks has shown an unusual level of volatility, in addition to a generally downward trend. This could be a reflection of high-impact news stories on trade wars, Facebook/Cambridge Analytica breaches of security and trust, and uncertainty over diplomacy in the Korean peninsula, the Arab world, and elsewhere. The Trump Administration is the common denominator. News from China about retaliatory tariffs, especially on agricultural products, appears to be aimed directly at the pocketbooks of many communities with high concentrations of Trump voters. An “Easter Truce” lasted all of about an hour before President Trump started another volley of “Poison Thumb” Tweets, beginning with an announcement that a “Dreamer Deal” was off the table because the Democrats basically blew their chance (to paraphrase.) All in all, not an auspicious lead-in to a Congress returning to Springtime-in-the-Swamp from their Easter/Passover recess.

To Impeach... or not to Impeach...

[MNNBC interviewed Rep. Gerald Nadler](#) (D-NY,) the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, and he offered up this description of what the Democratic Party is about: "I think the Democratic Party stands fundamentally for giving middle class people, and people who'd like to

be the middle class, lower income people, a fair shot, and to use the power of government to protect them against monopolies, against overweening power, and not to have the government sell itself to the highest bidder." When asked: "Do you think Donald Trump is a danger to our Democracy?" Nadler replied: "Yes I do," and also said: "I would dearly love to preside over the Impeachment of Donald Trump, on the other hand, you shouldn't do an impeachment unless the evidence is overwhelming, and unless you believe that by the end of the process you will have persuaded an appreciable fraction of the people on the other side -- not the members of the House or Senate, but people who voted for Donald Trump -- that you had to do it."

Trade wars -- [Money reports](#): "The Chinese government said that tariffs on about \$3 billion worth of US imports are going into effect Monday, hitting 128 products ranging from pork, meat and fruit to steel pipes. It's the latest move in escalating tensions between the world's two largest economies, which some experts fear could turn into a trade war." Agricultural producers in the Midwest -- and more generally rural economies with heavy concentrations of Trump voters -- could be especially hard hit.

Mueller Investigation / Psy Ops / Facebook / Stock Markets

As can be seen from the [Google market summary](#) (users can set this to three months, then one year, then five years,) the Dow Jones measure of the stock market has become highly volatile in the last three months, possibly a reflection of high-impact news stories on trade wars, Facebook/Cambridge Analytica breaches of security and trust, and uncertainty over diplomacy in the Korean peninsula, the Arab world, and elsewhere. A common denominator is the impact of the highly unstable and unpredictable Trump Administration.

The [NY Times](#) cites three unnamed sources and reports President Trump's lawyer, John Dowd, who recently resigned, "broached the idea of Mr. Trump's pardoning two of his former top advisers, Michael T. Flynn and Paul Manafort, with their lawyers last year." Mr. Dowd denies any knowledge of any such discussions. Legal experts are divided as to whether pardon offers might constitute obstruction of justice under the circumstances -- possibly influencing the decision of potential witnesses to cooperate or not cooperate with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation. In both cases the discussions reportedly occurred before indictments or guilty pleas were announced.

Amid continuing speculation about consequences if President Trump fires Special

Counsel Robert Mueller, [the NY Times offers up this analysis](#): "[I]t is anything but clear that the long-sSpeculated dismissal of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, would have the tectonic consequences that Mr. Flake and other Republicans and Democrats have spoken of — or any consequences at all." Luis Gutierrez, (D-IL), a member of the House Judiciary Committee, said "It would leave this committee no choice to go ahead with impeachment hearings." However, the Times analysis continues: aides to House Speaker Paul Ryan and Judiciary Committee Chair Robert Goodlatte "say privately that Republican leaders view the possibility of Mr. Mueller's firing as too improbable to warrant hypothetical discussions... Under current law, Mr. Trump cannot directly fire the special counsel. Even if he ordered the Justice Department official overseeing the case — right now, the deputy attorney general — to dismiss Mr. Mueller, he would have to cite good cause. But Mr. Trump has proved willing to fire or push out [others]... and could choose to remove those who objected to the order." Non-impeachment options for Congress include: passing a law reinstating an independent investigator (Trump's signature would be needed,) demanding that Mr. Mueller's evidence be turned over to Congress, and censure.

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