



FEATURE: Impeachment: week in review

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

Week ending 7/15/2018
(~ 2,170 words)
Bob “Again” Carney Jr., editor

Contact: MeetToImpeach@gmail.com

Minneapolis 7/15/18 Edition – The previous three weeks had been “slow news weeks” for impeachment. Not this one! Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein announced indictments of twelve Russian spies who are alleged to have interfered in the 2016 election. Although the consensus view of the U.S. intelligence community is that Russia both interfered in the 2016 U.S. election, and acted in ways to help President Trump’s campaign and harm Hillary Clinton’s campaign, in an extraordinary joint news conference in Helsinki Finland after his summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump backed Putin’s denials over the U.S. intelligence community. Of alleged Russian interference, Trump said: "I don't see any reason why.... President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today." During the same news conference, when asked if he had wanted Trump to win in 2016, and had told Russian officials to help Trump, President Putin said: “Yes I did.” Widespread outrage ensued, including incredulous comments from news broadcasters such as Anderson Cooper; former CIA Director John Brennan said Trump’s news conference was “treasonous” and an impeachable offense. A major excerpt from Rachel Maddow’s “Worst Case Scenario” is highlighted below. From the Administration, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats immediately contradicted the President in a statement: "We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the

2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security." Pundit Pat Buchanan offered a contrarian view, arguing the Helsinki Summit was both consistent with what President Trump has been doing and saying, and part of a larger plan to fundamentally realign the U.S. towards non-interventionism and a kind of self-interested neutrality. Sen. Rand Paul also backed Trump, saying the intelligence community: "was full of biased people." Earlier in the week President Trump had also shocked a NATO summit, demanding that members quickly and drastically increase their own defense spending, and claiming Germany was controlled by Russia due to a pipeline being built to supply Germany with Russian natural gas. During his visit to England, Trump further destabilized British Prime Minister Theresa May's already tottering government by appearing to back the recently resigned Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's view that May's plan for Brexit was too weak. Trump reportedly had advised May to sue the European Union to fight for stronger terms. Meanwhile, trade war events continue to escalate. After contentious Congressional testimony from FBI agent Peter Strzok, who many Republicans believe had a pro-Hillary Clinton bias that tainted his work, including investigating her e-mail server, there was talk among Republicans about trying to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is also Mueller's boss, but that has fizzled. Paul Manafort's first trial, in Virginia, is still scheduled to start July 24th, and to run two weeks. Taken together, it seems almost inevitable that a united response to Trump's recent series of perceived disasters will soon emerge. Amid all this confusion, the Dow Jones Average remains on an upward trend, up several hundred points since the beginning of the month, and suggesting, in effect, that the events of the last week are "sound and fury, signifying nothing." That's hard to believe. Could the market be anticipating President Pence?

MeetToImpeach Event: MeetToImpeach.com has announced the start of weekly meetings at People's Plaza in downtown Minneapolis. The next one will be Tuesday, July 24th, at 2:00 PM. "People's Plaza" (AKA "Government Plaza") is between Minneapolis City Hall and the Hennepin County Government Center, at 4th Street and 5th Avenue. Bob "Again" Carney Jr. [also the editor of this feature] said: "The purpose of these meetings is to launch a bi-partisan discussion of what our Constitution actually says about Impeachment and removal from office, and to challenge some major teachings of 'Conventional Wisdom' that appear to be just plain wrong... or incomplete at best." Although Carney is also a candidate for the Republican

nomination in the August 14th primary for U.S. Congress in the 5th District, which includes Minneapolis, these meetings will not be campaign events, and will be non-partisan.

Helsinki and Trump-in-Europe meteor-shower Fallout – and the “other side”

Reuters reports: “Standing side by side with Vladimir Putin, U.S. President Donald Trump refused on Monday to blame the Russian leader for meddling in the 2016 U.S. election, casting doubt on the findings of his own intelligence agencies and sparking a storm of criticism at home. ¶Although he faced pressure from critics, allied countries and even his own staff to take a tough line, Trump spoke not a single disparaging word in public about Moscow on any of the issues that have brought relations between the two powers to the lowest ebb since the Cold War. ¶Instead, he denounced the ‘stupidity’ of his own country's policies, especially the decision to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 election.”

Here are extended excerpts from post-Helsinki reporting and analysis by MSNBC's **Rachel Maddow**, presented as a Worst Case Scenario: "Here's why we have covered this story so intensely. Since it first became clear that there was something wrong, and illicit, and unexplained about the relationship between this particular foreign adversary and the unlikely rise of [Trump]... There was no explicable reason why, as a Presidential candidate, he would step with such excruciating care to avoid ever saying anything remotely negative or critical about Russia and its President." A long list of questionable ties and decisions related to Russia is provided, each starting with: "there was no reason...", followed by "there was no explicable reason for any of those things... unless you were willing to believe the worst. And honestly, who wants to believe the worst? You don't want to reckon with it... We haven't ever had to reckon with the possibility that someone had ascended to the presidency of the United States to serve the interests of another country rather than our own. What's the corrective to that? How do you remedy that? These are no longer hypothetical questions. This is where we are. And I recognize it sounds nuts to say it... Whatever happened in the long private meeting he insisted on taking with Vladimir Putin today, with no other American officials present, whatever happened there, what happened in public thereafter has really shaken the country today... If the President did that today because he has some reason to serve that other country, rather than our own, then... well, then a lot that has previously been inexplicable is now explicable. And that's the Worst Case Scenario. And... deep breath... it means we're going to have to come to terms with this as a

country, and we're going to have to come to terms with what we need to next as a country to fix this. And in order to do that, the blinders have to come off... The story of what Russia did to our country, and who might have helped them, and how, and how much trouble they might be in for that, it's just now starting to come into focus, the different pieces of it."

In his latest column -- "Trump calls off Cold War II" - former Reagan speechwriter and tried-to-be "Make America Great Again" forerunner to Trump **Pat Buchanan** offers up the "other side" -- writing: "Beginning his joint press conference with Vladimir Putin, President Trump declared that U.S. relations with Russia have 'never been worse.' He then added pointedly, that just changed 'about four hours ago.' It certainly did. With his remarks in Helsinki and at the NATO summit in Brussels, Trump has signaled a historic shift in U.S. foreign policy that may determine the future of this nation and the fate of his presidency. He has rejected the fundamental premises of American foreign policy since the end of the Cold War and blamed our wretched relations with Russia not on Vladimir Putin, but squarely on the U.S. establishment... Looking back over the week, from Brussels to Britain to Helsinki, Trump's message has been clear, consistent and startling. NATO is obsolete. European allies have freeloaded off U.S. defense while rolling up huge trade surpluses at our expense. Those days are over... We are not going to let Putin's annexation of Crimea or aid to pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine prevent us from working on a rapprochement and a partnership with him... On Syria, Trump indicated that he and Putin are working with Bibi Netanyahu, who wants all Iranian forces and Iran-backed militias kept far from the Golan Heights. As for U.S. troops in Syria, says Trump, they will be coming out after ISIS is crushed, and we are 98 percent there..." Buchanan sums up: "That is another underlying message here: America is coming home from foreign wars and will be shedding foreign commitments." Buchanan's whole article is worth reading, simply as the most cogent available explanation of "the other point of view" on what is rapidly coming to a boil in U.S. politics.

Trump's Supreme Court nominee may soon lead a Senate Impeachment Seminar

An analysis by the Washington Post's Aaron Blake commences: "President Trump has nominated to the Supreme Court a man who once co-wrote a report saying a president who lies, even if not under oath, could be impeached. That's a vast oversimplification of Brett Kavanaugh's role in drafting the 1998 Starr Report, which laid out grounds for impeaching

President Bill Clinton that included lying to his staff and the American people. But it's strictly accurate. And given that Trump has now nominated Kavanaugh, it presents Democrats with a chance to pepper him with questions about an uncomfortable topic for Trump. Whether that actually gets them anywhere is a different question. Kavanaugh confronted some similar queries in his 2004 confirmation hearing for his appeals court seat, and he didn't budge. 'It was not our place to say what the House should do with that or what the Senate should do with that evidence,' he said when pressed by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y)." Blake's article includes major excerpts from what Kavanaugh helped draft in the 1990's, during his work for Independent Counsel Ken Starr on the Clinton impeachment. Will Democrats transform the confirmation hearing into a seminar on Impeachment? Probably.

Justice Dept. announces indictments of Russian military officers in U.S. election hacking

On July 13th the U.S. Department of Justice provided prepared remarks of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein: "Today, a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia returned an indictment presented by the Special Counsel's Office. The indictment charges twelve Russian military officers for conspiring to interfere with the 2016 presidential election. Eleven of the defendants are charged with conspiring to hack into computers, steal documents, and release documents in an effort to interfere with the election. One of those defendants, and a twelfth Russian officer, are charged with conspiring to infiltrate computers of organizations responsible for administering elections, including state boards of election, secretaries of state, and companies that supply software and other technology used to administer elections. According to the allegations in the indictment, the defendants worked for two units of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff, known as the GRU. The units engaged in active cyber operations to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. One GRU unit worked to steal information, while another unit worked to disseminate stolen information."

Book Beat – another “major impeachment book” underwhelms

The PublishersWeekly.com web site indicates Harvard Law Professor Emeritus Alan Dershowitz' new book, *The Case Against Impeaching Trump*, has failed to crack the top twenty five best sellers for non-fiction hardcover. That would indicate less than 2,748 copies were sold -- the sales total for #25 on the list -- Dershowitz' publisher had earlier announced that 50,000 copies had shipped.

Impeach Rosenstein?

Business and Politics Review reports: "Two House Republicans are seeking to file impeachment documents against Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein as early as Monday, according to Capitol Hill sources who spoke with Politico. Reps. Jim Jordan and Mark Meadows, both members of the House Freedom Caucus, take issue with both the deputy attorney general's poor handling of the Russia investigation and his lack of transparency." The anger of Reps. Jordan and Meadows appears in part due to Rosenstein's decision to announce the indictments of twelve Russians during President Trump's trip to Europe, when he was meeting with England's Prime Minister Theresa May and Russia's President Vladimir Putin. Their plan has apparently been abandoned, possibly due to the most recent controversy over Trump's meeting with Putin. Politico reports: "The chairman of the powerful House Oversight and Government Reform Committee said Sunday [on Face the Nation] he doesn't support a push by conservative lawmakers to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein."

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