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Outlook for This Week in the Nation's Capital

Congress: House Democrats directed their pent up ire at President Donald Trump towards Attorney General Barr last week, after he refused to come testify before the House Judiciary Committee about the Mueller Report under different committee procedures than other witnesses are given. This has led to calls for his resignation or impeachment by a number of House leaders, and sets up another showdown this week as Chairman Nadler (D-NY) delivered a final warning to Barr to comply with a subpoena on Monday for the full Mueller report and its underlying evidence or face contempt of Congress proceedings. In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the Senate will not take up a House bill that would force President Trump to keep the U.S. in the Paris climate agreement, and he reiterated he will continue to block such bills, while continuing to advance Administration judicial nominees in the absence of other legislative business.

White House: President Trump insisted Saturday that a nuclear weapons agreement with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "will happen," in a morning Twitter burst that also included a post touting positive U.S.-Russia relations. Trump also warned that the Administration was "looking into" the actions of social media companies, comments that came one day after Facebook announced that it had permanently banned a host of prominent figures it described as "dangerous" from its platform. The President signaled that he will continue to tout his record on the economy as he ramps up his campaign rhetoric, after another strong jobs report showed the unemployment rate now at a 50 year low.

Budget & Appropriations: The House Appropriation Committee last week moved forward with releasing the first three FY20 bills of the year, Labor/HHS/Education, Legislative Branch and Military Construction/VA – Democrats in the Labor/HHS/Education greatly boosted funding for the NIH and other health and education priorities. Also released were the current allocations between the 12 House Subcommittees, also known as "302B"s, which showed significant proposed increases over FY19 – the Senate is working with much lower allocations for their 12 bills, which stresses the need to strike a budget cap deal sooner rather than later. In the Senate, a multibillion-dollar disaster aid package still needs some 'tweaks' but should be ready to receive broad bipartisan support this week, according to Senate Appropriations ranking member Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), after the latest offer from Republicans which includes an additional \$304 million in block grant funding for Puerto Rico. The House also intends this week to take up a new disaster aid package, and will mark up and release additional appropriations bills, TBD.

Last Week in the Nation's Capital

CONGRESS

Health

House Democrats Kick Off Wonky 'Medicare for All' Debate: House Democrats' first formal foray into debating a national "Medicare for All" system, with a rare initial hearing in the Rules Committee on Tuesday, demonstrates how carefully the party is trying to present a united image on a divisive election-year issue. Like the broader party, the committee's Democrats are split over a bill that would shift most Americans into a government-paid health care system. ([Roll Call](#))

House Appropriators propose NIH increase. The House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee last week proposed an additional \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for FY 2020. If enacted, NIH would receive \$41.1 billion next year. This increase continues the bipartisan support for NIH. Of note in the Subcommittee's recommendation: \$2.4 billion for Alzheimer's research; \$3.2 billion for HIV/AIDS; \$195 million for the Cancer Moonshot; the Funding for the All of Us precision medicine study would increase to \$500 million; the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative would receive \$411 million; and Research Centers in Minority Institutions would be funded at \$75 million. See the Committee's press release [here](#).

Defense

Senate Fails to Override Trump's Yemen Veto: The Senate on Thursday failed to override President Trump's veto of legislation ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. ([The Hill](#))

Judiciary

Nadler Threatens Barr with Contempt in Mueller Report Request: House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) on Friday sent a letter to the Department of Justice indicating he is willing to move forward with holding Attorney General William Barr in contempt of Congress if the committee does not receive subpoenaed information on special counsel Robert Mueller's report. ([The Hill](#))

Tax Reform

Ways and Means Announces Hearing on Tax Gap: The House Ways and Means committee plans to hold a hearing next Thursday on the so-called tax gap. The panel is slated to meet at 10 a.m. on the hundreds of billions of dollars in taxes that go uncollected every year. ([Ways & Means Committee](#))

Energy

Senate Nuke Development Bill May Hinge on Waste Issue: A bipartisan U.S. Senate bill intended to speed development of the next generation of nuclear reactors appears to have broad support, but passage may hinge on the fate of several other bills in the chamber that would address the long lingering issue of building a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel. ([RTO Insider](#))

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Health/HHS/NIH

Tennessee First to Ask Trump to OK New Type of State Medicaid Block Grant: Tennessee is charging ahead to become the first state in the nation to ask the Trump administration for Medicaid funding in a lump sum — a radical overhaul of the entitlement program that critics warn could force major cutbacks in health coverage for low-income people. ([Politico](#))

As Calls Mount to Ban Embryo Editing with CRISPR, Families Hit by Inherited Diseases Say, Not so Fast: In 2012, scientists showed that CRISPR, an ancient bacterial immune system, can edit DNA much the way “find and replace” edits a document, setting off a race to refine the tool for human gene therapies. Barely three years after, leaders in the field convened a private meeting in California’s Napa Valley to discuss their concerns about the possible use of CRISPR in IVF embryos, concluding that it should not be done, at least not yet. However some families who live with inherited diseases are opposed to the ban. ([Stat News](#))

Space/NASA & NOAA

Bridenstine Plays Down Costs of 2024 Moon Landing: NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine told Senate Appropriators during a May 1 hearing on the FY20 NASA Budget Request that while the administration is not yet ready to release a revised budget that accommodates an accelerated human lunar landing program, the costs will not be as high as some rumors, which claimed NASA might seek an additional \$8 billion a year for five years. ([Space News](#))

Trump Administration Has EPIC Plan to Develop the World’s Smartest Weather Forecasting Model: Neil Jacobs, the acting head of NOAA and a meteorologist, is committed to closing the gap between the European and NOAA weather forecasting models. Since being appointed to the Trump administration, he has made one of his top priorities installing a process that will allow U.S. forecast modeling to reach its potential and become world-class. ([Washington Post](#))

Scientists Lobby NASA for Additional Planetary Defense Missions: Scientists used an appearance by the NASA Administrator at the April 29 Planetary Defense Conference to press him to fund additional missions that support the agency’s work in discovering and characterizing near Earth objects. NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said the agency was taking steps to identify objects that could pose an impact hazard to the Earth, but that there was more work it needed to do to achieve goals established by Congress years ago. ([Space News](#))

Justice/DOJ

Justice Department Slams Pelosi for ‘Baseless Attack’ Against Barr: The Justice Department on Thursday issued a rebuke of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) for engaging in what it called a “baseless attack” against Attorney General William Barr after she claimed he committed a crime by lying to Congress. ([The Hill](#))

Labor & Workforce

Labor Secretary Skirts Trone’s Question About Ideal Minimum Wage: On International Workers’ Day, during a House Education and Labor Committee hearing, Maryland Rep. David Trone asked Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta a question on the minds of many workers: What do you think the federal minimum wage should be? Acosta said the issue can’t be boiled down to a single number, and that the Administration opposes Congressional Democrat’s attempts to increase it to \$15 in coming years. ([Maryland Matters](#))

Energy

Nuclear Power Finds Odd Bedfellow in 2020 Dems as Voters Look for Climate Change Solutions: Several candidates vying for the party’s presidential nomination in 2020 are promoting or have shown openness to expanding “next-generation” nuclear power as part of the arsenal of options to aggressively address the effects of climate change. ([USA Today](#))

Transportation/DOT

Trump’s Pursuit of Infrastructure Deal Hits GOP Roadblock: President Trump faces stiff opposition from Republicans in his desire for a massive infrastructure package. GOP lawmakers say the president’s grand proposal for a \$2 trillion deal is too ambitious and warn that they will oppose any measure that adds to the deficit. ([The Hill](#))

Boeing Crisis Tests Elaine Chao’s Agenda at Transportation Department: As critical questions mounted after the second fatal crash of a Boeing 737 MAX jet in March, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao sent a one-page memo to the acting head of the Federal Aviation Administration. ([WSJ](#))

Defense

Shanahan Orders Clampdown on Sexual Assault, Harassment: Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan wants to make sexual harassment a military crime in its own right and is calling on top commanders to stamp out sex assault and harassment as the Pentagon releases a damning new report showing the problem is getting worse. ([Politico](#))

Banking & Financial Services

The OCC Jumps into the Sandbox: On April 30, 2018, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) opened a 45-day public comment period on a proposed Innovation Pilot Program. The OCC, like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Securities and Exchange Commission, is opening its doors in an effort to partner with financial institutions in order to "foster constructive innovative ideas to improve the industry." ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

Trade

New Trade Case on Imports of Vertical Metal File Cabinets from the People's Republic of China: New U.S. antidumping and countervailing duty petitions were filed on April 30, 2019 by Hirsh Industries, LLC against imports of vertical metal file cabinets from the People's Republic of China. The merchandise subject to these investigations consists of vertical metal file cabinets containing extendable file storage elements, having a width of 25 inches or less and having a height that is greater than its width. ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

Trump Says Tariffs on China will be Increased to 25% as Trade Talks Stall: President Trump tweeted on Sunday that tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods will be raised from 10% to 25% on Friday, as trade talks between the U.S. and China progress "too slowly." ([Axios](#))

Cyber

China's Spying Poses Rising Threat to U.S.: Chinese spies are increasingly recruiting U.S. intelligence officers as part of a widening, sustained campaign to shake loose government secrets. ([WSJ](#))

2020 Census IT Readiness, Cybersecurity Remain Problematic for GAO: Government Accountability Office (GAO) Director of IT and Cybersecurity Nick Marinis emphasized concerns about the Census Bureau's IT readiness and cybersecurity ahead of the 2020 census, at a House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee oversight hearing last Tuesday. ([MeriTalk](#))

Homeland Security/DHS

Trump Picks Mark Morgan as New Head of ICE: President Trump on Sunday announced Mark Morgan as his choice to lead U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Morgan served as chief of the Border Patrol in the final months of the Obama administration. He left the post in late January 2017, one day after Trump signed an executive order calling for the construction of a wall across the U.S. southern border. ([Politico](#))

Trump Administration Proposal Would Make it Easier to Deport Immigrants Who Use Public Benefits: The Trump administration is considering reversing long-standing policy to make it easier to deport U.S. legal permanent residents who have used public benefits, part of an effort to restrict immigration by low-income people. ([CNBC](#))

Homeland Security to use Speedy DNA Testing to Verify Migrant Family Relationships: The Department of Homeland Security is preparing to launch a pilot project that will allow federal immigration officials to use DNA testing to verify whether migrant families crossing the southern border are, in fact, families. ([USA Today](#))

Education

DeVos Hires Consultants to Examine Student Loan Portfolio: The Trump administration has enlisted several outside consultants to examine the costs of the Education Department's \$1.5 trillion student loan portfolio and has considered options for selling off some of the debt to private investors, according to federal procurement records and department officials. ([Politico](#))

Interior

Trump Erases Offshore Drilling Rules Enacted After BP Oil Spill: The Trump administration last Thursday dismantled safety rules for offshore drilling put in place by the Obama administration after the disastrous BP oil spill fouled the Gulf of Mexico nearly a decade ago. The rollbacks are a major victory for the oil and gas industry that has criticized the Obama rules as too onerous and costly to comply with, but which supporters say have helped prevent a repeat of the accident that killed 11 workers and spewed more than 200 million gallons of oil in 2010. ([Politico](#))