

## TRANSITION BRIEFING

**Obama Watchdog** in **New York Times**

# *Congress Has New Target in Trump Era: Postal Reform*

By Maggie Haberman, Jennifer Steinhauer and Matt Flegenheimer

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- An Obama watchdog has changed his tune now that a Republican will be in the White House.
- President-elect Donald J. Trump, after an intelligence report concluded that Russia tried to help him get elected, is going after ... Meryl Streep.
- A Trump fib: You can't buy a dress in Washington for the inauguration.

## **An Obama watchdog's new teeth: Postal reform**

Representative Jason Chaffetz, Republican of Utah and chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, said that his committee will still poke around in Hillary Clinton's email issues in the new Congress, pointing out that new ones have emerged just this week for that State Department.

"I don't want this to linger," he said.

Mr. Trump may or may not get scrutiny. Mr. Chaffetz said it is not his job or plan to be Mr. Trump's "cheerleader," but that the six letters he has gotten from Democrats

on the committee concerning Mr. Trump were “silly” because he isn’t president yet.

“The president is exempt from most of these issues,” Mr. Chaffetz added.

His committee spent eight years dogging President Obama over “scandals” that included gunrunning at the Justice Department, the I.R.S.’s slowdown of tax-exemption applications from Tea Party groups, Benghazi and, of course, the Clinton emails.

This year’s priorities will be postal reform; turning back Mr. Obama’s application of the Antiquities Act, which designated large areas of land monuments in some Western states; and changing pension programs for new federal workers.

He would also like to see new government buildings or functions set up outside Washington.

## Schumer to McConnell on nominations: Back atcha

When it comes to presidential nominations, Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, had a pointed message on Monday to Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader: Same to you.

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He took a letter that Mr. McConnell, then the minority leader, wrote to Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, then the majority leader, in 2009. That letter detailed all of the background documents — from the F.B.I., the Office of Government Ethics and other entities — that President-elect Barack Obama’s nominees had to have before the Senate considered their confirmation.

Mr. Schumer then crossed out Mr. Reid's name, scrawled in Mr. McConnell's, swapped his signature for Mr. McConnell's and released it to the public.

## **The other big topic — overhauling the tax code**

Paul D. Ryan, the speaker of the House, is meeting on Monday evening with top members of Mr. Trump's transition team to discuss rewriting the tax code, kick-starting conversations on a priority issue for Republicans on Capitol Hill.

The meeting was expected to include Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump's chief strategist and the former head of Breitbart News, which has often aggressively targeted Mr. Ryan. Reince Priebus, Mr. Trump's pick for chief of staff and a Ryan ally, and Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law — who on Monday was named a senior adviser — were also planning to attend.

A senior Republican aide said the meeting, which was first reported by The Washington Post, would allow Mr. Ryan to walk the future White House team through his tax plans, unveiled as part of Mr. Ryan's "Better Way" agenda last year.

## **Under fire after intelligence report, Trump lashes out — at Meryl Streep**

The Golden Globe Awards on Sunday night featured a scathing speech by the actress Meryl Streep against Mr. Trump:

“There was one performance this year that stunned me — it sank its hooks in my heart, not because it was good; there was nothing good about it. But it was effective and it did its job. It made its intended audience laugh, and show their teeth.

“It was that moment when the person asking to sit in the most respected seat in our country imitated a disabled reporter,” she said, referring to a speech in 2015 when Mr. Trump shuddered and flailed his arms, appearing to mock a disabled reporter at The New York Times. “It kind of broke my heart when I saw it, and I still can’t get it out of my head, because it wasn’t in a movie. It was real life.”

Mr. Trump, in his inimitable way, spoke with Patrick Healy of The Times to respond to that attack — and then took to Twitter.

For the record, Mrs. Clinton did not lose big. She won the popular vote by nearly three million votes and lost the presidency by losing Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin by about the number of people who cheered the Packers at Lambeau Field on Sunday.

Also for the record, here is the video of his original speech referring to that disabled reporter:

Mr. Trump told Mr. Healy that he was “not surprised” that “liberal movie people” were going after him on national television, and he said he “never mocked anyone.”

“People keep saying I intended to mock the reporter’s disability, as if Meryl Streep and others could read my mind, and I did no such thing,” Mr. Trump said in the interview.

“And remember, Meryl Streep introduced Hillary Clinton at her convention, and a lot of these people supported Hillary,” he said, referring to Ms. Streep’s remarks at the Democratic National Convention last summer on behalf of his opponent.

# The president-elect's latest fib: All the capital's dress stores are sold out



Mr. Trump appeared in the lobby of Trump Tower in Manhattan on Monday.  
Kevin Hagen for The New York Times

As Trump fibs go, it wasn't a particularly important one. But one has to ask, why bother?

As the president-elect attacked Ms. Streep in a phone call with The New York Times, he took a moment to say his inaugural celebrations are such a hot ticket that “dress shops” in the area are selling out.

“We are going to have an unbelievable, perhaps record-setting turnout for the inauguration, and there will be plenty of movie and entertainment stars,” Mr. Trump said. “All the dress shops are sold out in Washington. It’s hard to find a great dress for this inauguration.”

To which Washington-area stylists replied, “Huh.”

“All of the stores in the area are set up with huge inaugural shops,” Lauren A. Rothman, a Washington-based stylist and author who is focusing on dressing around 30 clients for two inaugural balls. “When you walk in, you don’t even have to work hard to find the dress section.”

Women who need dresses and accessories can find what they need at those oh-so-hard-to-find department stores Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdales and Nordstrom, she said. Two-strap styles and matte satin gowns in lengths that skim the floor are plentiful.

Linda Giordano, an assistant manager of sales for Nordstrom at Tysons Corner Center in McLean, Va., said that there were no inventory issues and that women could reliably find dresses between \$200 and \$10,000 in the “happy colors,” including jewel-toned blues and bright pinks, that have been popular with inaugural ball shoppers.

“If they’re looking for stylists we still have availability,” she said.

Jan Batch, a stylist for Neiman Marcus at the nearby Tysons Galleria, put in her plug: “If you get a ticket today, call me.”

## **Trump has also turned his attention to a favorite foe: the news media**

The president-elect may not have owned up to any discomfort over the conclusion of American intelligence agencies that the Russian president tried to help him get elected, but his Twitter account betrays a certain unease. His pattern during the campaign was to turn against the news media when he was on his heels.

He's at it again.

Late Sunday, seemingly apropos of nothing, he wrote on Twitter:

Then, early Monday, he praised the media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, whose Fox News channel has turned increasingly pro-Trump.

## **Fiat-Chrysler to invest in U.S., and the president-elect takes credit**

Mr. Trump has already threatened General Motors with an import tax if it expands its Chevrolet Cruze plant in Mexico. He went after Toyota, and also suggested that Ford was investing in a Louisville, Ky., truck plant to avoid his wrath.

He may not yet have gotten around to Chrysler, the smallest of the Big Three automakers in Detroit, but Chrysler pre-empted him. Its parent corporation, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, announced over the weekend that it would invest \$1 billion in plants in Michigan and Ohio to expand production of three new Jeep models, and that it would move production of a Dodge Ram pickup truck from Mexico — part of a \$5.3 billion plan that was initially announced in September 2015. The move is expected to create 2,000 jobs by 2020, the end of Mr. Trump's term.

That initial announcement made it clear that the broad expansion of production would be complicated, sending some work to Mexico while expanding other lines in the United States. But this weekend's announcement was all positive, and Mr. Trump claimed it as his own.

“The expansion of our Jeep lineup has been and continues to be the key pillar of our strategy,” Sergio Marchionne, the chief executive of Fiat Chrysler, said in a statement. “We will finally have the capacity to successfully penetrate markets other than the U.S. which have historically been denied product due to capacity constraints.”

## **The big week ahead**

Mr. Trump might want to save some of his ammunition. He’s got a big week ahead.

On Tuesday, his nominee for attorney general, Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, will go before the Senate Judiciary Committee for confirmation hearings, as will Gen. John F. Kelly, the nominee for Homeland Security secretary.

On Wednesday, confirmation hearings are set for Rex W. Tillerson, the secretary of state-designate; Representative Mike Pompeo of Kansas, picked to lead the C.I.A.; Betsy DeVos, selected to be education secretary; and Elaine Chao, nominated to lead the Transportation Department.

On Thursday, Mr. Trump’s choice for labor secretary, Andy Puzder of Hardee’s and Carl’s Jr. fame, will be up before the committee, as will the billionaire investor Wilbur Ross, tapped to be commerce secretary.

On Wednesday, the president-elect has promised to hold his first full news conference since July.

## **A little Trump Tower outreach to the opposition**



Mr. Trump has done relatively little to reach out to those who opposed his candidacy, but this week he will meet with Richard L. Trumka, the president of the labor umbrella group A.F.L.-C.I.O., according to two people briefed on the meeting.

Like most representatives of labor groups, Mr. Trumka supported Mrs. Clinton in the election, and he was a vocal opponent of the Republican nominee. But Mr. Trump did well in Rust Belt states with large working-class populations, including with some members of Mr. Trumka's organization.

Mr. Trumka held a news conference with nine House Democrats last week to promise that he would rally votes for an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

## **Russia goes full Pepe the Frog**

Poor Pepe.

The cartoon frog was once just an internet meme shared widely by teenagers who liked its laid-back vibe. Then white supremacists backing Mr. Trump's campaign latched onto it as a symbol of white resurgence.

Now, inexplicably, the Russian Embassy in London has joined the Pepe cause, using the frog to mock the British news media's efforts to thwart a thaw in United States-Russia relations now that a leader sympathetic to Mr. Putin is about to arrive in the Oval Office — possibly with the assistance of Mr. Putin himself.

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