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## Al Udeid: Home to 11,000 U.S. troops and critical to winning the War on Terror

By POLITICO FOCUS CONTRIBUTOR, SPONSORED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF QATAR | 07/08/2019 11:49 AM EDT

**A**mid the headlines of President Trump's recent meetings with foreign leaders such as Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un, there's one important meeting happening that hasn't taken center stage, but should. Next week, President Donald Trump plans to meet with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, at the White House. Though no official agenda for the meeting has been released, the two are expected to discuss a range of issues pertaining to U.S. interests in the Middle East region— issues that include security, counterterrorism and the ongoing international pressure on Iran to discontinue its nuclear programs.

Central to many of these discussions is the Al Udeid Air Base southwest of Doha, Qatar. One of the largest U.S. military bases outside of the U.S., Al Udeid has grown increasingly important to the U.S.'s ongoing military operations in the Persian Gulf, particularly as relationships with other Persian Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia have become increasingly complex.

Spurred by a Defense Cooperation Agreement signed by the U.S. and Qatar after Operation Desert Storm, Qatar built the Al Udeid Air Base in 1996 for \$1 billion.

After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. secretly used the base for the first time to position Air Force aircraft in the leadup to the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Home to the U.S. Combined Air Operations Center, the U.S. Air Force Central Command Forward Headquarters, and U.S. Central Command's Forward Headquarters since 2003, the base's role in U.S. operations was revealed to the public in 2002, and it soon became crucial to air operations in Iraq.

By 2003, the U.S. began shifting more of its air operations from Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan Air Base to Qatar, as antagonism toward any U.S. presence in the country had already led to numerous terror attacks on U.S. soldiers in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s and eventually led to increased operational restrictions enforced by the Saudi government. Since the end of the first Persian Gulf War, Osama bin Laden had publicly demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, even citing this as the motivation behind numerous strikes against U.S. forces, including the twin embassy bombings in East Africa and the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen. This mounting pressure spurred the Saudi Arabian government to deny American planes access to launching any ground-attacks from its airfields, limiting air activities to non-strike missions only. These restrictions forced American commanders to position attack aircraft in various Gulf countries rather than at one major base, costing the U.S. more money and decreasing efficiency.

In the absence of a "status of forces" agreement, Saudi Arabia also subjected U.S. military members stationed in the country to its strict Islamic laws, as opposed to American military law, making it a less hospitable environment to operate within. "Moving to Al Udeid is sort of a natural progression for us as we look for a footprint that will be maintainable in the future," Maj. Gen. Victor E. Renuart told The New York Times in 2003.

Even prior to this move, the U.S. government had long planned to reduce its reliance on Saudi Arabia. "Ever since the gulf war ended, we've been working to try to minimize the amount of time and size of the footprint that U.S. forces have in Saudi Arabia," then White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. told The New York Times in 2002. "They've been asking a long time, and we've been working with them for a long time—not just during this administration but during previous administrations—to reduce the footprint."

While the Al Udeid Air Base has been Qatar's largest contribution to U.S. military operations, the country also has a strong record of counter-terrorism efforts designed to help support the ongoing War on Terror. This military and intelligence cooperation is integral to achieving peace and stability in the region, with Qatar's counter-terrorism efforts aiding U.S. missions in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The country also allowed the U.S. Department of Justice to install advisers in Qatar's General Prosecutor's Office to help in rooting out and prosecuting domestic terrorism. Further, in June of 2018, Qatar's National Counter-Terrorism Committee published a list of 28 individuals who are suspected of supporting terrorist operations in the region. The list included the

targeting of Qatari nationals in an effort to crackdown on individuals and entities supporting terror operations.

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis reflected on this critical relationship at the opening session of the inaugural U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue at the U.S. Department of State in early 2018, telling the crowd: “We are grateful to Qatar for their longstanding support of America’s present and continuing commitment to regional security, a commitment that includes information sharing and counter-terrorism training.”

Also in attendance was former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who called Qatar “a strong partner and a longtime friend of the United States.” In a statement issued by the U.S. Department of State, he noted that following President Trump’s challenge to Gulf partners during the 2017 Riyadh summit, Qatar had made significant progress to improve its efforts to combat terrorism. He echoed that praise again at the event, specifically expressing appreciation for Qatar’s information sharing and recent completions of the Qatari Air Force’s first C-17 flights from the Gulf to Afghanistan and back, providing logistical support to the NATO counter-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. “I look forward to a lasting Qatar-U.S. security relationship, a relationship that will continue to bolster our efforts against common security threats and violent extremism,” Tillerson stated.

Qatar continues to serve as a strong U.S. ally, and the Al Udeid Air Base is a key asset to U.S. military operations in the area, especially as an air blockade enforced by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain in 2017 blocking air traffic heading to and coming out of Qatar subjects more than 40,000 U.S. citizens and soldiers to flying over Iranian airspace at times of heightened tensions in the region.

As the largest U.S. military installation in the Middle East, Al Udeid now hosts more than 11,000 American and Coalition military personnel and a fleet of Air Force KC-10 and KC-135 refueling tankers, and it has runways long enough to handle any aircraft. It’s been the primary launch site for air attacks against ISIS.

Earlier this year, at the second U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue in Doha, the country signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Department of Defense to “promote interoperability, support regional stability and reaffirm the U.S.-Qatar defense relationship.” The agreement underscored the U.S. and Qatar’s commitment to working together to address a number of regional security challenges and the U.S. Department of State established the partnership as key to “combating terrorism, countering violent extremism and deterring external aggression.”

The two governments reaffirmed their commitment to a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation to promote peace and stability, while the U.S. applauded Qatar’s willingness to expand critical facilities like Al Udeid, to align operating procedures with NATO standards, thereby increasing the operational capability of U.S. and coalition forces based in Qatar.

Under the agreement, Qatar plans to improve the living conditions for military personnel, spending \$1.8 billion to build entertainment facilities and family compounds. Qatar estimates it has spent \$8 billion on the Al Udeid Air Base in its efforts to support the U.S. military to date.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo thanked Qatar for the support it provides through Al Udeid and called the defense relationship between the two countries, “extensive, important, and growing.”

With the Trump administration’s increasing focus on Iran and its ongoing war with ISIS, Qatar will continue to play a vital role for the U.S. as it advances its interests in the region. The meeting between President Trump and Emir Sheikh Tamim is sure to reaffirm this alliance and touch upon new ways the two countries can strengthen their ties. As Qatari Minister of Defense Khalid Al-Attiyah put it in 2018, “Qatar and the United States have joined a historic and strategic partnership built on a mutual respect and shared vision of a better tomorrow ... [We] have stood together many times in force -- in face of aggression and in support of freedom, both in my region and across the world.”

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*The above column is sponsor-generated content paid for by the Government of Qatar. Learn more about sponsor-generated content. This article was written by a contributor for POLITICO Focus, POLITICO's brand studio. POLITICO's editorial team was not involved in the creation of this article.*

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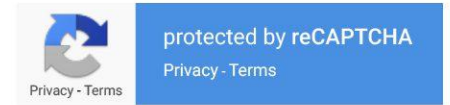
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**To:**  
**Subject:** POLITICO Playbook: A sneak peek at the next hot Trump book

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# POLITICOPLAYBOOK

BY [JAKE SHERMAN](#), [ANNA PALMER](#) AND [DANIEL LIPPMAN](#)

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## ○ DRIVING THE DAY

**TIM ALBERTA'S JUICY NEW BOOK**, "American Carnage: On the Front Lines of the Republican Civil War and the Rise of President Trump," is out July 16, and will be one of the deepest and most fascinating reads about the transformation of the Republican Party over the last 15 or so years. The book begins in the twilight of the Bush presidency, and ends with the release of Robert Mueller's report in April of this year. We're told it includes lots of new, unreported storylines on the massive transformation of the party.

**TAKE A SNEAK PEEK** at the back cover for a taste of the tasty nuggets we should expect from Alberta's book: "Romney's problem was he had too much respect for Obama. And he shouldn't have, because Obama didn't deserve it," Donald Trump. ... "The Reagan Republican wing beat the Rockefeller Republican wing. And now the

Trump wing beat the Reagan wing," Paul Ryan. [Back cover image ... \\$20.22 on Amazon](#)

**DEPT. OF JELLO? ... WAPO'S ANNE GEARAN, BOB COSTA and DAVID LYNCH: "Trump's hard line approach appears to soften in meetings with world leaders":** "President Trump entered his meeting with President Xi Jinping over the weekend promising to take a tough approach on trade negotiations and pressure his Chinese counterpart into a sweeping deal.

**"But the meeting did not produce an agreement — and Trump's** stance seemed to only soften as he announced he was relaxing limits on Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei and delaying new tariffs on Chinese goods in hopes of restarting trade talks with Beijing. 'We discussed a lot of things, and we're right back on track,' Trump said. 'We'll see what happens.'

**"Trump's meetings with Xi and other leaders at the Group of 20** economic summit suggest that despite his promise to use negotiating savvy and personal relationships to extract concessions from rivals or uncooperative allies, he often leaves one-on-one sessions with fellow world leaders without firm agreements in hand." [WaPo](#)

**PAGING POMPEO ... WAPO'S JOHN HUDSON:** "Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his special envoy, Steve Biegun, have been given two to three weeks to start new talks with their North Korean counterparts aimed at making a breakthrough in stalled denuclearization negotiations. ...

**"One variable that is expected to change in the Trump administration's** favor is the leader of North Korea's negotiating team. Pompeo said Sunday that the North Korean Foreign Ministry would be leading the talks for the country. 'I don't know exactly who from the Foreign Ministry, but it's likely to be one of a couple people,' he said.

**"One potential counterpart for Biegun is North Korean Vice Foreign Minister** Choe Son Hui, a seasoned diplomat with years of

experience working with American officials on denuclearization issues. Previously, when the Foreign Ministry was sidelined from the talks, Kim entrusted the negotiations to his former spy chief, Kim Yong Chol, a longtime hawk who came off as inscrutable and arrogant during meetings with Pompeo and his aides, U.S. officials said." [WaPo](#)

**-- NYT'S ED WONG: "Trump Officials Are Split Over Approach to North Korea Talks":** "Some officials are considering a freeze as a first step toward a more comprehensive agreement for Mr. Kim to give up his entire nuclear program. [National security adviser John] Bolton has long insisted that the North Koreans dismantle their nuclear program and give up their entire arsenal of warheads before getting any rewards. ...

**"Mr. Bolton and [Secretary of State Mike] Pompeo had both urged the president** to settle for nothing less than a grand deal, but Mr. Pompeo now appears open to considering a gradual approach." [NYT](#)

**MAKING THE ROUNDS ON TWITTER ...** White House official [@mercedesschlapp](#) on Feb. 18, 2016: "@BarackObama visiting Cuba is equivalent to visiting North Korea Embracing communism is anti-American. he is giving Castro dictators a pass."

**THINK ABOUT IT ... FROM A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT** Monday on Iran: "There is little doubt that even before the deal's existence, Iran was violating its terms."

**Happy Tuesday morning. THE LATEST ON JULY FOURTH ... AP/D.C.:** "At least two Army tanks have arrived in Washington ahead of a Fourth of July celebration that President Donald Trump says will include military hardware.

**"An Associated Press photographer says the two M1A1** Abrams tanks are with four other military vehicles on a freight train in a railyard at the southeastern edge of Washington. The vehicles are being guarded by military police but are visible to passersby on nearby paths. A military official earlier told the AP that the tanks were transported north from Fort Stewart in Georgia." [AP](#)

-- **WAPO'S @gregpmiller:** "Trump says July 4 celebration will have 'brand new Sherman tanks.' Sherman tanks haven't been in service since 1957."

-- **YIKES ... NYT'S TANKS STORY:** "Another problem is that Arlington Memorial Bridge, which spans the Potomac River and connects Arlington National Cemetery and the Lincoln Memorial, might not be able to hold the weight." [NYT](#)

**TRUMP on "TUCKER CARLSON TONIGHT" ... THE PRESIDENT** told the Fox News host that the deal he was cutting with China was "the largest deal ever made of any kind, not only trade." The president also said that homelessness in cities like New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles "is a phenomenon that started two years ago." [The homelessness bit ... The full interview](#)

-- **FWIW ... SEN. RICK SCOTT** on CNBC's "Squawk Box Europe" ... ["I don't believe there will be a deal' between U.S. and China, says Republican senator"](#)

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

Qatar and the United States enjoy a strong counter-terrorism relationship, one that includes military and intelligence cooperation integral to achieving peace and stability in the region. The U.S. military, houses one of their largest military bases outside of the US in Qatar with over 11,000 U.S. soldiers stationed at Al-Udeid Air Force base. Qatar is currently investing in the base to make it even more comfortable for U.S. soldiers. [Learn more.](#)

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**KNOWING STEPHANIE GRISHAM -- "Baptism by fire: Stephanie Grisham's eventful first days,"** by AP's Jonathan Lemire and Jill Colvin: "She is President Donald Trump's new top spokeswoman. But she said barely a word during what became her introduction to the world.

**"Stephanie Grisham received a baptism by fire over the weekend**

as she accompanied the president on his high-stakes trip to Asia and threw her body into a fracas with North Korean security officials.

**"It was an early sign of how Grisham,** a former Trump campaign staffer and aide to the first lady, might reshape a role she technically didn't start until Monday. She's taking the job just as Trump enters a White House stretch that will help determine whether he wins another four years in the job." [AP](#)

**NOT A BAD DEAL FOR MICK,** via WSJ's Catherine Lucey: "White House acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney is receiving a higher salary than his two predecessors, a reminder of his unusual status straddling two different positions.

**"The latest annual report to Congress on White House personnel** shows that President Trump's third chief of staff is getting an annual salary of \$203,500, compared with Reince Priebus and John Kelly, each of whom earned \$179,700. The White House said Mr. Mulvaney continues to be paid by the White House Office of Management and Budget, where he is technically still the director. The OMB director salary level is set by law, as are other federal salaries." [WSJ](#)

**2020 WATCH -- "Record advertising wave heading for swing states in 2020,"** by Elena Schneider: "Advertising Analytics, a political ad-tracking firm, expects the total cost of TV and digital ads for the next election to hit over \$6 billion — a 57 percent increase over the total in last year's hotly contested and expensive midterm elections, driven by a huge jump in digital video advertising.

**"Over one-quarter of the \$6 billion total, \$1.6 billion,** will be spent on digital video platforms, primarily Facebook and Google, while broadcast and cable TV stations will take in a whopping \$4.4 billion — more than twice as much as Democrats and Republicans spent on TV in the last presidential elections." [POLITICO](#)

**-- AMY CHOZICK for VOGUE: "[Madam President? Five Candidates on What It Will Take to Shatter the Most Stubborn Glass Ceiling](#)"** *With photos by Annie Leibovitz*

-- "["Harris allies see sexism and desperation in Biden camp backlash,"](#) by Chris Cadelago

-- "**Hickenlooper shakes up campaign amid staff departures,**" by Nolan McCaskill and Alex Thompson: "[John] Hickenlooper announced late Monday the hiring of a new campaign manager, M.E. Smith, who managed Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey's reelection in 2018. Smith also served as deputy campaign manager for Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet, now a fellow 2020 competitor, and held the same role for Hickenlooper's reelection for governor in 2014. ...

"**His spokeswoman, Lauren Hitt,** later confirmed that she would be leaving the campaign, joining former campaign manager Brad Komar. 'Brad Komar is no longer with the campaign,' Hitt told POLITICO. 'Neither is Finance Director Dan Sorenson. I will also be transitioning out over the next few weeks.'" [POLITICO](#)

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

Qatar has a strong record of collaborating with U.S. agencies to crack down on terrorist financing, including high-level partnerships and activities with key U.S. authorities. [Learn more.](#)

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## **THE JUICE ...**

-- **FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- SHANNON PETTYPIECE** is joining NBC as a White House reporter for NBC News Digital. She comes aboard after two years covering the White House for Bloomberg.

-- **BEN RAY LUJÁN,** the House Democrat running for Senate in New Mexico, raised more than \$1.1 million in the last quarter from more than 13,000 unique donors. Luján has sworn off corporate PAC contributions. Nearly 98% of the contributions were donations of \$100 or less.

-- **ELTON GALLEGLY,** a California Republican who hasn't been in Congress since 2012, paid his wife \$900 last quarter for "book keeping

and reporting services." He has just north of \$113,000 in his campaign account.

**TRUMP'S TUESDAY** -- The president has nothing on his public schedule.

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**POLITICO's The Agenda: The New Moon Race issue, presented by Leidos, has landed.** America is heading back to the moon, but so is everyone else. This special report brings together POLITICO's growing space expertise with pivotal industry players, [including NASA chief Jim Bridenstine](#), to explore the stakes of the new moon race. [Read the full issue now.](#)

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**PLAYBOOK READS**



**PHOTO DU JOUR:** Military police walk by Abrams tanks in Washington on Monday ahead of President Donald Trump's upcoming July Fourth celebration. | Patrick Semansky/AP Photo

**JACK KEANE PROFILE** -- ["The Fox News general who 'spooked' Trump out of attacking Iran,"](#) by Eliana Johnson

**DEEP DIVE** -- "Spies fear a consulting firm helped hobble U.S."

**intelligence,"** by Natasha Bertrand and Daniel Lippman: "For the last four years, the powerhouse firm McKinsey has helped restructure the country's spying bureaucracy, aiming to improve response time and smooth out communication. Instead, according to nearly a dozen current and former officials who either witnessed the restructuring first-hand or are familiar with the project, the multi-million dollar overhaul has left many within the country's intelligence agencies demoralized and less effective.

**"These insiders say the efforts have hindered decision-making** at key agencies — including the CIA, National Security Agency, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. They say McKinsey helped to complicate a well-established linear chain-of-command system, slowing down projects and turnaround time, and applied cookie-cutter solutions to agencies with unique cultures. In the process, numerous employees have become dismayed, saying the efforts have at best been a waste of money and, at worst, made their jobs more difficult." [POLITICO](#)

**HONG KONG LATEST ... AP'S KEN MORITSUGU:** "A ruling Chinese Communist Party newspaper has taken a hard line against pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, saying demonstrators who broke into the local legislature showed their 'arrogance' and had no regard for the rule of law.

**"Chinese state media ran footage of police in Hong Kong clearing protesters** from streets early Tuesday in a break with their silence over days of pro-democracy demonstrations that have challenged Beijing's authority over the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

**"Beijing has largely sought to downplay the demonstrations** that have highlighted doubts about the validity of its 'one country, two systems' formula for governing the former British colony. Its coverage of the protests and the publication of a harsh editorial in the official Communist Party newspaper Global Times may indicate it is prepared to take a tougher line against the demonstrators following days of forbearance." [AP](#)

-- **NYT'S JAVIER HERNÁNDEZ** in Hong Kong: "Until now, protesters took pride in having no recognized leaders and using encrypted messaging to crowdsource their direction. But the pitfalls of that approach have begun to emerge, with protesters disagreeing over tactics and goals and lacking a consistent position from which to negotiate — even as the government toughens its stance." [NYT](#)

-- **FOR YOUR RADAR --** ["Chinese military conducts anti-ship missile tests in hotly contested South China Sea,"](#) by CNBC's Amanda Macias and NBC's Courtney Kube

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

Qatar is proud to house the U.S. Military's largest military base in the Mid-East. [Learn more.](#)

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**YOUR CHEESE PLATE IS ABOUT TO GET PRICIER -- "U.S. Proposes Tariffs on Another \$4 Billion of EU Goods,"** by Bloomberg's Sarah McGregor and Jenny Leonard: "The U.S. Trade Representative's office on Monday published a list of \$4 billion worth of EU goods the U.S. could hit with duties as retaliation for European aircraft subsidies. The products range from cherries to meat, cheese, olives and pasta, along with some types of whiskey and cast-iron tubes and pipes. It adds to a list of EU products valued at \$21 billion that the USTR published in April, according to the release." [Bloomberg ... \*The list\*](#)

**THE NEXT CULTURE WAR FOOTBALL ... WSJ: ["Nike Nixes 'Betsy Ross Flag' Sneaker After Colin Kaepernick Intervenes"](#)**

**IMMIGRATION FILES --** CBP will soon begin sending Central American migrants to Tamaulipas, a drug- and violence-torn state along on Mexico's Gulf Coast. But as Univision anchor Enrique Acevedo [notes](#), the [State Department travel advisory](#) for Tamaulipas reads as follows:

**"Do not travel due to crime and kidnapping.**

**"Violent crime, such as murder, armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion, and sexual assault, is common.** Gang activity, including gun battles and blockades, is widespread. Armed criminal groups target public and private passenger buses as well as private automobiles traveling through Tamaulipas, often taking passengers hostage and demanding ransom payments. Federal and state security forces have limited capability to respond to violence in many parts of the state."

-- **FROM MEXICO CITY: "Mexico's migration crackdown overwhelms its shelters, antagonizes its neighbors,"** by WaPo's Kevin Sieff: "Detention centers at five times capacity. Migrants held on sports fields. Not enough medicine or health-care workers to go around."

**"In the weeks since Mexico signed a pact** with the United States to stop migration, conditions in detention centers and shelters have deteriorated dramatically, according to diplomats and human rights officials who have visited the facilities." [WaPo](#)

-- **REUTERS AT THE BORDER WITH AOC: "[Ocasio-Cortez describes 'horrifying' conditions at Texas migrant facility](#)"**

**MEGATRENDS -- "American Suburbs Swell Again as a New Generation Escapes the City,"** by WSJ's Valerie Bauerlein in Apex, N.C.: [WSJ](#)

**MEDIAWATCH ... THE DAILY BEAST'S SAM STEIN: "[Center for American Progress Puts ThinkProgress Up for Sale](#)"**

-- **Alison Morris** has started as the new anchor/host for NBC News NOW. She previously was a business reporter and anchor at Fox 5 in New York and has also worked for WSJ Europe, CNBC Europe and Fox Connecticut.

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**NEW GLOBAL PODCAST FROM POLITICO IS LIVE:** POLITICO's new podcast "Global Translations", presented by Citi, has officially

launched. In this first chapter, host Luiza Savage and guests explore free trade and unpack the true stakes of the political decisions being made in real time. Topics to be covered in upcoming chapters include technological disruption and the environment. [Listen Now.](#)

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**PLAYBOOKERS**

**SPOTTED:** Eliot Spitzer having lunch Monday at the Ritz-Carlton on Grand Cayman.

**WEST WING DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- NYT'S MAGGIE**

**HABERMAN** and **ANNIE KARNI:** "**Mercedes Schlapp**, the White House director of strategic communications, announced on Monday that she would leave her West Wing post to join President Trump's re-election campaign, the latest move in a shuffle of the White House press shop. Ms. Schlapp said in an interview that she had discussed her departure with Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, for weeks.

"**It had been widely expected** since Stephanie Grisham was appointed the new press secretary and communications director last week, according to multiple people familiar with the discussions. After some discussion of keeping Ms. Schlapp in the administration but moving her out of the White House and to an agency, those talks fell apart." [NYT](#)

**PER ILLINOIS PLAYBOOK:** "She said: yes!" **U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger** started his Fourth of July with fireworks. The Illinois Republican [announced on Instagram](#) that he's getting married. He's photographed with **Sofia Boza-Holman**, director of strategic media for VP Mike Pence and a former aide to former Speaker John Boehner. Kinzinger's post drew congratulatory messages from former U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock, former Trump spokesman Sean Spicer and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who even offered to officiate."

**WEEKEND WEDDING -- Emily Purser**, Washington bureau chief at Sky News, married **Zach Brown**, a former political producer in

London for Sky News who's now living in D.C. The couple met covering Brexit and got married in the south of France. [Pic](#)

**OMB ARRIVAL LOUNGE -- James Braid** has joined OMB as deputy associate director for legislative affairs for appropriations. He was most recently policy director for the House Freedom Caucus.

**BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Courtney Geduldig**, EVP of public affairs of S&P Global. **What she's been reading recently:** "I just finished reading '[Grant](#),' by Ron Chernow. Chernow is an expert writer -- he believes in redemption for the unredeemable. Whether it is the wealthy banker or the alcoholic Grant who has otherwise been portrayed as unsympathetic, Chernow tells the story through the eyes of a conflicted leader tortured by his need to find political power and help an oppressed enslaved minority group. Great read in another of Chernow's authentic literary voices." [Playbook Plus Q&A](#)

**BIRTHDAYS:** Eric Fanning, president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association, is 51 (hat tip: Caitlin Hayden) ... Jonathan Capehart (hubby tip: Nick Schmit) ... Brad Todd, founding partner of On Message ... Luci Baines Johnson is 72 ... Katherine Lehr ... POLITICO's Brooke Minters, Graph Massara and Cristina Rivero ... Sammi McClain ... former New Hampshire Gov. John H. Sununu is 8-0 ... former Mexican President Vicente Fox is 77 ... Keith Morrison, correspondent for NBC's "Dateline," is 72 ... Scott McGee of Kelley Drye ... Matthew Dybwad of Adobe ... Berrin Tunçel ... Collin Davenport ... Devon Gallagher ... Derek Gianino, national engagement director at U.S. Global Leadership Coalition ... Jenny Beth Martin, honorary chair of Tea Party Patriots Action (h/t Keith Appel) ... Victoria Adeniji ... FT's Sebastian Payne is 3-0 ...

... **Rep. Elise Stefanik** (R-N.Y.) is 35 ... Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.) is 59 ... Rep. Randy Weber (R-Texas) is 66 ... former Rep. Mike Castle (R-Del.) is 8-0 ... U.S. Army Capt. Chuck Nadd (h/t Brandt Anderson) ... Fenton CEO Ben Wyskida is 42 ... Kara Rowland ... Alysha Love ... Matthew L. Schwartz, Boies Schiller Flexner partner ... Sophie Zeigler ... Caroline Keyes ... Jessie Nguyen ... Gina Woodworth, director of U.S. public policy at Snap ... Eddie Fishman ... Joel Bernick is 81 ...

Arkadi Gerney ... Ethan Oberman is 43 ... Trevor Neilson is 47 ... Jean Cecil Frick ... Marie Formica ... Reuters' Michele Gershberg ... Sam Nitz ... Time's Jonathan Woods ... Facebook's Brooke Oberwetter Coon is 4-0 (hubby tip: Joey) ... Emily Stanitz ... Lyndsey Fifield ... Hannah Rosenthal ... Michael Matthews ... Ashley Zohn ... Mike Chapman

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

President Trump's then Secretary of State on Qatar: "We are grateful to Qatar for the longstanding support of America present and continuing commitment to regional security, a commitment that includes information sharing and counterterrorism training" [Learn more.](#)

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## ○ DRIVING THE DAY

**COUNTERPROGRAMMING ... CHARLOTTE OBSERVER: "Trump plans rally in Greenville, NC, on day Mueller is set to testify,"** by Noah Feit: "The Keep America Great rally is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Only two tickets per person are available for those registering to attend the Greenville rally, according to the website. Williams Arena is on the campus of East Carolina University and has a capacity of 8,000 for basketball games." [Charlotte Observer](#)

**SURGING KAMALA, REELING BIDEN --** Here's how Sen. **KAMALA HARRIS** has done in the latest major polls since last week's debate, reflecting her breakout performance in Miami: [Quinnipiac University national poll](#): +13 since June ... [USA Today/Suffolk University Iowa poll](#): +9 since June ... [CNN/SSRS national poll](#): +9 since May. [NYT's Matt Stevens has more](#)

-- Per [Quinnipiac](#), "Biden hits his lowest number yet in the Democratic primary race with 22 percent of the vote among Democrats and Democratic leaners."

-- **WHAT'S UP WITH BERNIE?** He still has a strong base of support, but his numbers seem to be flatlining, falling to just 9% in [Suffolk's new Iowa poll](#). Vox's **Andrew Prokop** notes: "[T]his is the worst showing for Sanders in any Iowa poll all year — it's the only time he's dropped down to single digits." [Vox](#)

-- **NO BUENO FOR THE GENTLEMAN FROM EL PASO: ["Beto O'Rourke says he's not aware of his fundraising numbers,"](#)** by David Siders in Ames, Iowa

**SPOTTED:** Mick Mulvaney and Reince Priebus waiting out the rain delay Tuesday night at Nats Park in the Budweiser Brew House. Justice Elana Kagan was also seen separately at the game.

**THE BORDER CRISIS -- NYT: "Government Watchdog Finds Squalid Conditions in Border Centers,"** by Zolan Kanno-Young: "Overcrowded, squalid conditions are more widespread at migrant centers along the southern border than initially revealed, the Department of Homeland Security's independent watchdog said Tuesday. Its report describes standing-room-only cells, children without showers and hot meals, and detainees clamoring desperately for release.

**"The findings by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General** were released as House Democrats detailed their own findings at migrant holding centers and pressed the agency to answer for the mistreatment not only of migrants but also of their own colleagues, who have been threatened on social media.

**"In June, inspectors from the department visited five facilities** in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and found children had few spare clothes and no laundry facilities. Many migrants were given only wet wipes to clean themselves and bologna sandwiches to eat, causing constipation and other health problems, according to the report.

Children at two of the five facilities in the area were not given hot meals until inspectors arrived.

**"Overcrowding was so severe** that when the agency's internal inspectors visited some of the facilities, migrants banged on cells and pressed notes to windows begging for help." [NYT ... \*The report\*](#)

**-- ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION: "Feds looking to house 500 immigrant children in metro Atlanta,"** by Christopher Quinn: "The U.S. Health and Human Services Department wants a Georgia location in the region south of I-20 from downtown Atlanta to Carrollton and west of I-75 between downtown to about Griffin. ...

**"The request calls for at least 96,000 square feet of space with room** for classrooms, bedrooms, bathrooms, medical facilities and two acres of outdoor space for play. It will take about 167 staff members to operate it. HHS is accepting bids until late July. The facility has to be ready by June 2020. The request calls for up to a 20-year lease, according to details posted on the Government Services Administration website." [AJC](#)

**TRUMP'S LATEST FED PICK ... WSJ: "Judy Shelton in Her Own Words,"** by David Harrison: "Ms. Shelton has repeatedly called for a return to the gold standard, a monetary regime that pegged the value of the dollar to the value of gold. That would make it impossible for the Fed to affect the strength of the dollar through monetary policy, she writes. 'For all the talk of a 'rules-based' system for international trade, there are no rules when it comes to ensuring a level monetary playing field.

**"The classical gold standard established an international benchmark** for currency values, consistent with free-trade principles. Today's arrangements permit governments to manipulate their currencies to gain an export advantage,' she wrote in another Journal opinion piece, in April." [WSJ](#)

**MEANWHILE, IN EUROPE ... FT: "Lagarde tapped to head ECB as EU reaches deal on top jobs,"** by Alex Barker, Michael Peel and Jim

Brunsdon in Brussels and Mehreen Khan in Strasbourg: "European leaders have agreed a deal to fill the EU's most important jobs, backing Christine Lagarde to lead the European Central Bank and Ursula von der Leyen to be president of the European Commission.

**"On the third day of a gruelling summit in Brussels, EU leaders gave** near-unanimous support for a package based around Ms. Lagarde, France's former finance minister who is now head of the IMF, and Ms. von der Leyen, Germany's defence minister." [FT](#)

**BULLETIN ... AP/TEHRAN** at 3:37 a.m.: **"Iran warns it will increase nuclear enrichment within days"**: "Iran's president is warning Europe that Tehran will 'take the next step' in increasing its uranium enrichment this coming Sunday. The comments Wednesday by President Hassan Rouhani further increases pressure on European partners to salvage the unraveling 2015 nuclear deal following the U.S. withdrawal from the accord last year.

**"Rouhani says: 'If you want to express regret and issue a statement,** you can do it now.' ... Iran this week breached a low-enriched uranium stockpile limitation set by the deal and said by Sunday it would increase its enrichment of uranium closer to weapons-grade levels if Europe does not offer it a new deal." [AP](#)

**WHAT'S ON THE PRESIDENT'S MIND -- @realDonaldTrump** at 12:06 a.m.: "Iran was violating the 150 Billion Dollar (plus 1.8 Billion Dollar in CASH) Nuclear Deal with the United States, and others who paid NOTHING, long before I became President -- and they have now breached their stockpile limit. Not good!"

-- **FYI:** The United States and IAEA both certified multiple times since 2017 that Iran was in compliance with the nuclear deal.

**Happy Wednesday** and happy Fourth of July eve. Playbook PM will be off Thursday and Friday. We'll still be in your inbox every morning.

**JULY FOURTH UPDATE -- "[Park Service diverts \\$2.5 million in fees for Trump's July Fourth extravaganza,](#)"** by WaPo's Juliet

Eilperin, Josh Dawsey and Dan Lamothe: "The National Park Service is diverting nearly \$2.5 million in entrance and recreation fees primarily intended to improve parks across the country to cover costs associated with President Trump's Independence Day celebration Thursday on the Mall, according to two individuals familiar with the arrangement. ...

**"The diverted park fees represent just a fraction of the extra costs** the government faces as a result of the event, which will include displays of military hardware, flyovers by an array of jets including Air Force One, the deployment of tanks on the Mall and an extended pyrotechnics show. By comparison, according to former Park Service deputy director Denis P. Galvin, the entire Fourth of July celebration on the Mall typically costs the agency about \$2 million.

**"For Trump's planned speech at the Lincoln Memorial,** the White House is distributing VIP tickets to Republican donors and political appointees, prompting objections from Democratic lawmakers who argue that the president has turned the annual celebration into a campaign-like event."

-- **WAPO'S DAN LAMOTHE:** "Part of the concern is that the vehicles will pulverize pavement in Washington, as they did during a parade in June 1991 after the Gulf War, and that the city will be left with the bill. This time, the tanks will be stationary and moved into place on flatbeds pulled by heavy-hauler trucks." [WaPo ... \*Video of the tanks/APCs being moved OVER a bridge ... Video of the tanks rolling on the streets of D.C. late Tuesday night\*](#)

-- **A HUMBLE REQUEST:** Please, headline writers, no more "tanks, but no tanks" puns! For America's sake.

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

Qatar and the U.S. have a strong counter-terrorism relationship. One component of that relationship is the Al Udeid Air Base, which houses over 11,000 soldiers and is central to U.S. operations in the Persian Gulf. [Learn more.](#)

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**U.S.A! ... WAPO'S LIZ CLARKE** in Decines-Charpieu, France: "[T]o get past England — their final hurdle in earning a spot in Sunday's championship match — the top-ranked U.S. women had to tap every tactic in their repertoire, summon the best from lightly tested players and, yet again, draw on the stone-cold conviction that there was no situation they couldn't overcome.

**"And two days before Independence Day, the U.S. team swept into the final** with a 2-1 victory over third-ranked England with style, depth, grit, an outstanding save by goalkeeper Alyssa Naehar and, most notably, without an ailing Megan Rapinoe, who had scored its previous four goals." [WaPo](#)

**MUSIC TO OUR EARS**, via WaPo's Jesse Dougherty: "The Nationals have now won 24 of their past 34 games and 11 of their past 14, and they are six games behind the Atlanta Braves in the tightening National League East. They have homered in 16 consecutive games, tying a franchise record set by the Montreal Expos in 1999, and Corbin has dominated in three straight outings since hitting a troubling rough patch. Juan Soto smacked a two-run homer and added a triple." [WaPo](#)

**QUOTE DU JOUR ... IN BRITISH VOGUE:** "The couple's union has become tabloid fodder, put under further scrutiny by [model Karlie] Kloss's own political views. While Kloss and her husband [Josh Kushner] are fervent Democrats, Kushner's brother Jared is a senior presidential advisor who happens to be married to Ivanka Trump. 'It's been hard,' she explains. 'But I choose to focus on the values that I share with my husband, and those are the same liberal values that I was raised with and that have guided me throughout my life.'" [Vogue UK](#) (hat tip: Annie Karni)

**ALEX ISENSTADT: "NRA meltdown has Trump campaign sweating":** "The [NRA] aired an avalanche of TV ads and pushed its five million-plus members to the polls for Donald Trump in 2016, propelling him in the Rust Belt states that delivered him the presidency. Now, the gun rights group is in total meltdown — and senior Republicans and Trump 2020 officials are alarmed.

**"In recent weeks, the NRA has seen everything** from a failed coup attempt to the departure of its longtime political architect to embarrassing tales of self-dealing by top leaders. The turmoil is fueling fears that the organization will be profoundly diminished heading into the election, leaving the Republican Party with a gaping hole in its political machinery.

**"With the Chamber of Commerce and Koch political network** withdrawing from their once-dominant role in electing conservatives, Republicans worry that three organizations that have long formed the core of their electoral infrastructure will be effectively on the sidelines.

**"The predicament has so troubled some Republicans** that they are calling on the famously secretive NRA to address its 2020 plans. Within the past week, senators have privately expressed concerns about the group to [NRSC] Chairman Todd Young (R-Ind.)."

[POLITICO](#)

**-- NYT'S DANNY HAKIM: "N.R.A. Donor Directs a Revolt Against a 'Radioactive' Leader":** "[O]ne of the gun group's major benefactors says he is preparing to lead an insurgency among wealthy contributors to oust [Wayne] LaPierre as chief executive, along with his senior leadership team. Such a rebellion would represent a troublesome new threat to Mr. LaPierre, as his organization's finances and vaunted political machine are being strained amid a host of legal battles, most notably the New York attorney general's investigation into its tax-exempt status.

**"David Dell'Aquila, the restive donor,** said the N.R.A.'s internal warfare 'has become a daily soap opera and it's decaying and destroying the N.R.A. from within, and it needs to stop.' He added, 'Even if these allegations regarding Mr. LaPierre and his leadership are false, he has become radioactive and must step down.'

**"Until that happens, Mr. Dell'Aquila,** a retired technology consultant who has given roughly \$100,000 to the N.R.A. in cash and gifts, said he would suspend donations — including his pledge of the bulk of an estate worth several million dollars." [NYT](#)

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

As the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East, the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar plays a vital role in the War on Terror. [Learn more.](#)

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**TRUMP'S WEDNESDAY** -- The president will have lunch with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at 12:45 p.m. in the private dining room.

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**POLITICO's The Agenda: The New Moon Race issue, presented by Leidos, has landed.** America is heading back to the moon, but so is everyone else. This special report brings together POLITICO's growing space expertise with pivotal industry players, [including NASA chief Jim Bridenstine](#), to explore the stakes of the new moon race. [Read the full issue now.](#)

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 PLAYBOOK READS



**PHOTO DU JOUR:** Navy Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher leaves court in San Diego on Tuesday after being acquitted of murder in a war crimes case that drew President Donald Trump's attention. | Gregory Bull/AP Photo

**BEHIND THE SCENES -- "[Trump's negotiator signals flexibility in North Korea talks](#),"** by Axios' Jonathan Swan and Erica Pandey:

"Steve Biegun, the Trump administration's North Korea negotiator, told reporters in an off the record briefing Sunday that the administration wanted a 'complete freeze' of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction program while they are negotiating with the U.S. ...

**"Biegun said the administration isn't ready to lift the sanctions** against North Korea if it freezes its weapons program, but that it could give Kim other concessions, such as humanitarian relief and improved diplomatic ties. ... Biegun insisted, however, that the administration hasn't abandoned its goal of 'complete denuclearization.'"

-- **YOWZA! ... AP'S MATT LEE (@APDiploWriter):** "Let's be honest here: There was a story Sunday night/Monday that said the admin was considering a 'freeze' as the end deal for NKorea. Then there was a story [Tuesday] that said a 'freeze' wasn't the end game but something that could be rewarded, which is completely different ...

**"In the meantime, a transcript from an off-record briefing** with an official who disputed the initial story but said there could be concessions for partial steps, was given (not 'leaked') to another outlet. This has been policy for 18 months and is presented as a 'scoop'?"

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

[See how](#) the U.S.-Qatar defense relationship (hyperlink to piece) is integral to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

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**TRUMP THROWS IN THE TOWEL ON THE CENSUS ... NYT'S**

**MICHAEL WINES:** "The Trump administration ... abandoned its quest on Tuesday to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census, a week after being blocked by the Supreme Court. Faced with mounting deadlines and a protracted legal fight, officials ordered the Census Bureau to start printing forms for next year's head count without the question.

**"The decision was a victory for critics** who said the question was part of an administration effort to skew the census results in favor of Republicans. It was also a remarkable retreat for an administration that typically digs into such fights." [NYT](#)

-- **TRUMP RESPONDS, CONFUSINGLY**, via Twitter: "A very sad time for America when the Supreme Court of the United States won't allow a question of 'Is this person a Citizen of the United States?' to be asked on the #2020 Census! Going on for a long time. I have asked the Department of Commerce and the Department of Justice ... to do whatever is necessary to bring this most vital of questions, and this very important case, to a successful conclusion. USA! USA! USA!"

**FOR YOUR RADAR ... BLOOMBERG: "[Grim Earnings Forecasts Are Getting Worse by the Week](#):"** More than 80% of companies have cut their earnings outlook."

#### **MIKE PENCE'S MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR -- ABC'S**

**@tarapalmeri:** "Pence's COS Marc Short told @meridithmcgraw that the Vice President was on the plane but it didn't take off. Then he turned around, back to the White House. He told her we'll find out 'in a few weeks' what happened. ... Also, spokesperson for the Granite Recovery Center tells me there were no obvious security concerns on the ground -- like protesters etc. 250 people sent home."

-- **NYT'S MAGGIE HABERMAN:** "Multiple people familiar with what happened offered at least a partial explanation. They said it was related to the place Mr. Pence was scheduled to visit, the Granite Recovery Center, but they did not offer any details." [NYT](#)

**MEDIAWATCH -- Linzee Troubh** is joining The Atlantic as development director, a new job where she will oversee the development of scripted and unscripted content from The Atlantic. She most recently worked at BuzzFeed Studios on a team that helped create original documentary content based on BuzzFeed reporting.

-- **Wajahat Ali** is now a CNN contributor. He is also a contributing op-ed writer for the NYT.

-- **WAP0'S PAUL FARHI** on the decline and fall of Breitbart: "Since Trump became president, monthly traffic has virtually collapsed, plummeting nearly 75 percent." [WaPo](#)

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**NEW GLOBAL PODCAST FROM POLITICO IS LIVE:** POLITICO's new podcast "Global Translations", presented by Citi, has officially launched. In this first chapter, host Luiza Savage and guests explore free trade and unpack the true stakes of the political decisions being made in real time. Topics to be covered in upcoming chapters include technological disruption and the environment. [Listen Now.](#)

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 **PLAYBOOKERS**

**REMEMBERING LEE IACOCCA ... NYT'S ROBERT MCFADDEN:**

"Detractors branded him a Machiavellian huckster who clawed his way to pinnacles of power in 32 years at Ford, building flashy cars like the Mustang, making the covers of Time and Newsweek and becoming the company president at 46, only to be spectacularly fired in 1978 by the founder's grandson, Henry Ford II.

**"But admirers called him a bold, imaginative leader** who landed on his feet after his dismissal and, in a 14-year second act that secured his worldwide reputation, took over the floundering Chrysler Corporation and restored it to health in what experts called one of the most brilliant turnarounds in business history." [NYT](#)

**SPOTTED:** Jeff Bezos having dinner Tuesday night at the Queen's English ... Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky.) at Hawk 'n' Dove "with family escaping the rain storm and texting from two phones simultaneously," per our tipster.

**OMB ARRIVAL LOUNGE -- PER NANCY COOK:** "The press shop at the Office of Management and Budget continues to grow under the leadership of Rachel Semmel, the budget office's new associate director for communications. Among the new hires are **Rob Kuhlman**, formerly of DHS, who is now an OMB press secretary and

speechwriter, and **Chase Jennings**, former of Capitol Hill and the RNC, who is also working as press secretary."

**BIRTHDAY OF THE DAY: Jim McGreevy**, president and CEO of the Beer Institute, is 55. **What he's been reading recently:** "I just finished ['The Scarlet and the Black'](#) by J.P. Gallagher, an interesting book about a priest in Rome during World War II who saved thousands of people from the Nazis through his auspices as a Vatican official. The book showed the extraordinary courage ordinary people needed to have to survive such a terrible time. Reading the story of this priest and his colleagues was inspiring, and you wonder if you could have mustered the same courage." [Playbook Plus Q&A](#)

**BIRTHDAYS:** Lally Weymouth ... Dave Barry is 72 ... Julian Assange is 48 ... Don "Stew" Stewart ... Rick Powell, vice chairman of Teneo ... Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) is 79 ... Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.) is 64 ... Republican political consultant Dave Carney ... Gloria Allred is 78 ... Rick Sanchez ... Kristen Morgante ... Peter Sherman, SVP of PAC services at DDC Advocacy (h/ts Jon Haber) ... Nick Baldick, managing partner of Hilltop Public Solutions ... AFP's Shaun Tandon ... POLITICO's Allie Bice ... James Lightbourn ... Cameron Morabito is 26 ... Barbara Lee, president and founder of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation ... PBS NewsHour's Julia Griffin (h/t Nick Massella) ... Rina Shah ... Scott Hatch (h/t Tim Burger) ... Suzanne Palmieri (h/t Francisco) ...

... **Andrew Peek**, deputy assistant secretary of State for Iraq and Iran in the Bureau of Near East Affairs -- [profile](#) ... Lara Sisselman ... CNN's Lindy Royce ... Chris Welch ... Adam Goldberg, co-founder and partner at Trident DMG, is 5-0 (h/t Eleanor McManus) ... Connor Sallet ... Maya Serkin ... Austin Fielding ... Patrick Stranix ... Mariana Quevedo Vallejo ... Alicia Criscuolo ... Charlotte Brown, project director for Public Opinion Strategies (h/t Natalie Boyse) ... Ian Martinez ... Kate McCarty ... Naomi Lim ... Mary Yatrousis ... Brigham McCown ... Jay Oliver Sax ... Scot Faulkner ... Mari-Lynn Evans ... Sandra Lee is 53 (h/t AP)

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A message from The Government of Qatar:

Next week, President Donald Trump plans to meet with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, at the White House. The two are expected to discuss a range of issues pertaining to U.S. interests in the Middle East including the ongoing international pressure on Iran to discontinue its nuclear programs. Qatar has a strong record of counter-terrorism efforts, and the U.S.- Qatar defense relationship is integral to the ongoing War on Terror. Central to much of The President and The Emir's discussion will be the Al Udeid Air Base, one of the largest U.S. military bases outside of the U.S. Al Udeid hosts more than 11,000 American and Coalition military personnel and has been a primary launch site for air attacks against ISIS. It is an increasingly important component in the U.S.'s ongoing military operations in the Persian Gulf. [Learn more.](#)

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