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From: Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman
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Subject: Playbook Power Briefing, presented by Samsung: COMEY's opening statement for tomorrow -- TRUMP picks CHRISTOPHER WRAY for FBI director -- Rogers, Coats say they never felt pressured -- WHAT BOEHNER said in Old Town last night -- HORNE to Twitter -- TIM...

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Today's Playbook Power Briefing presented by Samsung
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BREAKING -- JIM COMEY'S opening statement from tomorrow is up.
<http://bit.ly/2rMG1bK>

PLAYBOOK SCOOP -- GREAT INTRIGUE -- FORMER SPEAKER JOHN BOEHNER was hanging out at CXIII REX, the private cigar bar in Old Town last night, and was riffing on politics. **BOEHNER** said he would "rather be dead than run for the Senate." He also said President Donald Trump would have to "grow ears and listen" for him to go to the White House and serve as chief of staff.

SPOTTED lunching this afternoon: **KELLYANNE CONWAY** and **COREY LEWANDOWSKI** at Bobby Van's on 15th Street, NW.

Good Wednesday afternoon. TRUMP'S PICK FOR FBI -- "Trump taps Christopher Wray to head FBI," by Louis Nelson: "Wray served as an assistant attorney general from 2003 to 2005 during the tenure of former President George W. Bush. He is currently a partner at the law firm King & Spalding, where he chairs its special matters and government investigations practice group.

"At the Justice Department, Wray was the assistant attorney general in charge of the department's criminal division. He was a member of Bush's corporate fraud task force and led the task force charged with investigating the Enron scandal. More recently, Wray acted as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's personal attorney during the federal investigation into lane closures on the George Washington Bridge that were put in place by members of Christie's administration as political retribution for a mayor who did not support the governor's reelection campaign." <http://politi.co/2sDUQNB> ... **Wray's law firm bio** <http://bit.ly/2s4tT8G>

-- **Former Obama DOJ spokesman @matthewamiller:** "Wray probably the best choice from the WH short list. His record in the Bush DOJ deserves scrutiny, but he's a serious, respectable pick."

GET SMART FAST -- "5 things to know about Trump's FBI pick Christopher Wray," by Josh Gerstein <http://politi.co/2sDUXsP>

-- **NO SENIOR REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS**, that we can tell, were given a heads up on this selection. Speaker Paul Ryan said this morning he doesn't know Wray but he seems good. **CHUCK GRASSLEY (R-IOWA)** and **DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D-CALIF.)**, the top two senators on the Senate Judiciary Committee, were not told about Wray's nomination in advance, our colleague Seung Min Kim (@seungminkim) tweeted.

TODAY'S HEARING -- ROSENSTEIN, MCCABE, ROGERS AND COATS -- LOTS OF 'WE WON'T DISCUSS THAT' -- Admiral Mike Rogers, director of the National Security Agency: "Today I am not going to talk about theoreticals. I am not going to discuss the specifics of any interactions or conversations that I may or may not have had with the president was United States, but I will make the following comment. In the three-plus years that I have been director of the National Security Agency, to the best of my recollection, I have never been directed to do anything I believe to be illegal, immoral, unethical or inappropriate and to the best of my recollection during that same period of service I do not recall ever feeling pressured to do so."

-- **DNI DAN COATS** was asked about today's Washington Post story (<http://wapo.st/2rTQxjk>), which said Trump asked him to intervene with the FBI about its Russia investigation. He said he would not discuss it in open session, but if you read between the lines, it seemed that he might discuss it in the closed session that's happening this afternoon.

JUST ASKING ... Which senator is going to spill the beans on the non-classified info said in the closed session.

-- **WORTH NOTING:** On several occasions, the witnesses cited the special counsel's investigation as a reason for not being able to answer questions.

-- **SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.)**, after being told by Coats he would not discuss the Washington Post story, but might in a closed session: "You know, it is just showing what kind of an Orwellian existence that we live in. It is detailed -- as you know -- from reading the story as to when you met, what you discussed, et cetera et cetera, yet here in a public hearing before the American people we can't talk about what was described in detail in this morning's Washington Post. Do you want to comment on that?" ... Chair **RICHARD BURR (R-N.C.)**, closing out the hearing: "At no time should you be in a position where you come to Congress without an answer." **More key moments from Nolan McCaskill** <http://politi.co/2sT5eAs>

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POTUS IN OHIO -- President Trump avoided mentioning his new pick for FBI director -- or James Comey's testimony tomorrow -- in a speech in Cincinnati. By this president's standards, this was a fairly standard speech. He talked up America's history of great infrastructure projects and said that "the future is going to be beautiful and the future is going to be bright" with his infrastructure plan, while decrying the decay of America's infrastructure. He promoted Saudi Arabia taking the lead in the fight against terrorism and "radical Islam." He also slammed Obamacare, saying it is in a "death spiral" and called Democrats obstructionists.

COMING ATTRACTIONS -- "3 senior FBI officials can vouch for Comey's story about Trump," by Murray Waas in Vox: "One by one this winter, then-FBI Director James B. Comey pulled aside three of the bureau's top officials for private chats. In calm tones, he told each of them about a private Oval Office meeting with President Trump - during which, Comey alleged, the president pressed him to shut down the federal criminal investigation of Trump's then-national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

"**Those three officials**, according to two people with detailed, firsthand knowledge of the matter, were Jim Rybicki, Comey's chief of staff and senior counselor; James Baker, the FBI's general counsel; and Andrew McCabe, then the bureau's deputy director, and now the acting director, following Trump's firing of Comey last month. Comey spoke to them within two days of his Oval conversation with Trump, the sources said, and recounted the president's comments about the Flynn investigation."

<http://bit.ly/2sTokXm>

THE PIVOT -- @realDonaldTrump at 8:17 a.m.: "Getting ready to leave for Cincinnati, in the GREAT STATE of OHIO, to meet with ObamaCare victims and talk Healthcare & also Infrastructure!"

HOT DOC -- The Office of Government Ethics disclosed Wednesday roughly two dozen ethics waivers given to top executive branch officials. <http://bit.ly/2r2Fe9u>

THINGS PUTIN SAYS - per Bloomberg's Jake Rudnitsky, Ilya Arkhipov, and Henry Meyer: "While Putin expounds on favorite subjects including U.S. geopolitical overreach, he's also shown staring stone-faced at the classic Cold War doomsday satire Dr. Strangelove. He explained that he never has an off day as president because he's a man. 'I am not a woman, so I don't have bad days,' he tells [Oliver] Stone while giving a tour of the Kremlin's gilded throne room. 'I am not trying to insult anyone. That's just the nature of things. There are certain natural cycles.'" <https://bloom.bg/2rKLCPy>

NEW POLLS -- "Post-ABC Poll: Most say Trump is interfering with Russia investigations," by WaPo's Scott Clement and Emily Guskin: "A 56 percent majority of U.S. adults say Trump is interfering with such investigations rather than cooperating, while 61 percent say Trump fired Comey to protect himself rather than for the good of the country. Comey also faces serious credibility problems ahead of his highly anticipated Senate testimony Thursday, with 36 percent of Americans saying they trust

what he says about Russia and the election 'a great deal' or 'a good amount,' while 55 percent trust him less or not at all. The poll finds substantial skepticism across party lines, evidence that his role investigating the campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump has taken a toll." <http://wapo.st/2sDpbfr>

-- **A new Quinnipiac poll** found that 31 percent of American voters say Trump did something illegal in his relationship with Russia, while 29 percent said he did something unethical but not illegal. 32 percent said he did nothing wrong. **More on climate change and Trump and the media** <http://politi.co/2sEb6OL>

BIG BUSINESS -- FORTUNE has released its 63rd edition of the Fortune 500, its annual list of the largest corporations in the U.S. Combined, the companies have a total market value of \$19.4 trillion dollars and employ 28.2 million people. Wal-Mart takes the top spot for the fifth year in the row, followed by Berkshire Hathaway, Apple, Exxon Mobil, McKesson, UnitedHealth Group, CVS Health, General Motors, AT&T and Ford. **The list** <http://for.tn/2s3Xn6W> ... **The cover** <http://bit.ly/2s4eSDX>

BIPARTISAN KUMBAYA- "Former VP Joe Biden to headline Mitt Romney summit in Park City," by AP's Steve Peoples: "Just days after launching a new political action committee, former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden will join Republican officials and donors at a weekend retreat hosted by former GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney. Biden will be interviewed by Romney during a Friday evening event in Park City, at the invitation-only summit, according to a Biden spokesman and participants briefed on the schedule." <http://bit.ly/2sCH91E>

D.C. MAYOR MURIEL BOWSER SPEAKS -- A big thank you to D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser for joining us last night at the first Playbook University event at Howard University's IN3 space. Bowser touched on everything from the honoring the Paris climate deal to her message to Trump and Congress to leave D.C. alone. And, the **HOT TOPIC** for many of our readers -- yes, she addressed the D.C. rat problem. **Videos -- Paris** <http://politi.co/2rB3lLa> ... **Her message to Trump, Congress** <http://politi.co/2sSYJh6> ... **And on D.C. rats** <http://politi.co/2sDEZia> ... **The full event** <http://politi.co/2s4uxTZ>

IN THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS -- "A Look Inside the Senate Hearing Room Where James Comey Will Testify Thursday," by NBC4 Washington's Scott MacFarlane and Andrea Swalec <http://bit.ly/2sDzT5w>

BRAD PARSCALE PROFILE - "Donald Trump's Michael Bay," by BuzzFeed's Henry J. Gomez: "Brad Parscale isn't a mysterious strategist like Steve Bannon. He doesn't live on TV like Kellyanne Conway. He's not even all that into politics. But the digital marketing specialist's loyalty to Donald Trump, his children, and his brand earned Parscale a central role in a winning White House campaign. How far will loyalty lead him?" <http://bzfd.it/2qVYktG>

TIM MILLER HEADS WEST - "Republican political operatives want to sell the dark

arts of opposition research to tech companies," by Recode's Tony Romm: "The newest startup setting up shop in the Bay Area is Definers Public Affairs, a Washington, D.C.-based outfit that seeks to apply the dark science of political opposition research to the business world. ... To the GOP-led political venture, Silicon Valley is a natural target for their so-called 'oppo' efforts. The tech industry is characteristically hyper-competitive, with boardroom squabbles, takeover attempts, and legal wars over employees and patents and regulations. ... [T]he firm's new Oakland-based operative [is] Tim Miller, who previously served as communications director to GOP presidential contender Jeb Bush." <http://bit.ly/2r2DzAG>

TODAY'S BEYOND THE BELTWAY -- Cuomo rallies with Pelosi -- AFL-CIO endorses J.B. Pritzker in Illinois gubernatorial race <http://politi.co/2s4s0J9>

MEDIAWATCH -- "Why Breitbart Fired an Editor for a Tweet," by The Atlantic's Rosie Gray: Katie "McHugh's termination primarily reflects the site's change in leadership. The fact that under [Alex] Marlow, the site has to some extent bowed to public pressure, further underscores Bannon's absence at the helm." <http://theatln.tc/2sEcP6G>

ON THE HILL -- "Inside the heaving, jostling Capitol media mob: 'We are one tripped senator away' from disaster," by WaPo's Elise Viebeck and Ben Terris: "Once thought to be going the way of the dodo bird or zeppelin repairman, journalists of the Trump era are crowding legislative hallways at such a startling density that the endangered species is starting to seem like ... an invasive one. ... While events like the Comey hearing naturally limit the number of reporters present - only so many people can actually fit into the room - the Capitol itself does not. Anyone with an active press credential can roam the grounds and the building. To a visiting White House reporter, the recent typical day on Capitol Hill might seem like anarchy." <http://wapo.st/2sT0uL5>

-- **@pkcapitol:** "So it begins. They're setting up corrals to pen in reporters in Senate basement. We did this to ourselves & deserve this treatment." <http://bit.ly/2sTqUwi>

TRANSITIONS -- FIRST IN PLAYBOOK -- EMILY HORNE is joining Twitter as its global policy communications director. She is going to be the top spokesperson on topics like data, privacy and advocacy initiatives. She'll be based in D.C. Horne (@emilyjhorne) was the assistant press secretary and director for strategic communications at the National Security Council. She's a State Department alumna, and worked for Gen. John Allen. Emily is a GW alum.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD - Alexa Marrero, director of operations for corporate comms at Boeing and alum of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and House Education and Labor committees, and **Miguel Marrero**, director of technology development for REM-Fit, email friends and colleagues: "José Callin (Cal) Marrero arrived at 10:29 [Tuesday] morning, clocking in at 22 inches and 10 lb. 3 oz. He spent his first day at NorthShore Evanston hospital winning top honors for best hair and entertaining NFL scouts. He is an aviation and tech enthusiast like his father with a type

A, schedule-driven personality like his mother. We are thrilled to welcome this big little man, named for his father and both his grandfathers, to the world." **Pics**

<http://bit.ly/2r1wb8F> ... <http://bit.ly/2r5aZKb>

OUT AND ABOUT -- From Jewish Insider: "American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad), led by Rabbi Levi Shemtov, held their annual Lamplighter Awards dinner at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in DC. Honorees included House Speaker Paul Ryan, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, and former DC Mayor Anthony Williams. One notable bipartisan highlight of the evening featured Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer introducing Speaker Ryan. Hoyer thanked Ryan for his service and leadership to the country and noted that both he and the Speaker are 'institutionalists' who respect the traditions and decorum of the Congress. Ryan returned the compliment explaining that 'among both Republicans and Democrats, Steny Hoyer's word is gold.' Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer also delivered remarks focusing on the change in US policy towards Iran and at the UN."

SPOTTED: UAE Ambassador Yousef al-Otaiba, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), and David Kustoff (R-Tenn.), Rhoda Dermer, Howard Friedman, Dov Zakheim, Nancy Jacobson, Lisa and Charlie Spies, Tevi and Kami Troy, William Daroff, Steve Rabinowitz, Aaron Keyak, Dan Glickman, Bill Knapp, Azerbaijan's Ambassador Elin Suleymanov, Bulgarian Ambassador Tihomir Stoytchev.

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