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Ladies & Gentlemen, below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group.

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EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | AUGUST 10, 2018

TOP STORIES

Chris Collins

On Wednesday, one of President Trump's first congressional supporters, Rep. Chris Collins (R-N.Y.), was arrested for insider trading. Collins says he is innocent and will fight the charges. But the indictments are serious enough that Collins's own party in Congress has basically ditched him. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan [kicked](#) Collins off the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee.

Collins, 68, pleaded not guilty Wednesday during an appearance at federal court in Manhattan, where a judge ordered him released on \$500,000 bond, and told him to come back for a hearing in the case on October 11th. To read about the specifics of the indictments, click [here](#).

Iran Negotiations

The Trump Administration re-imposed economic sanctions on Iran that Barack Obama's administration had lifted when it signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. The Trump Administration has talked of bringing more economic pressure on Tehran not only to end its nuclear ambitions, but also to curb its regional influence and even weaken the Islamic Republic's hold on power, which led many to see U.S. policy as one aimed at regime change.

A larger issue for Iran is that it no longer has the leverage it did when it last entered nuclear talks. It has since ceased its nuclear program, making its leaders skittish about negotiating now. But Iran does not have the luxury of choosing when it wants to talk: the strain of U.S. sanctions deprives it of the time it would need to rebuild the nuclear program as it stood in 2015. Indeed, the results of Washington's significant economic pressure on Tehran are showing. Iran's currency has lost two-thirds of its value, and shortages have caused rampant inflation and unemployment; this, in turn, has stoked popular frustration and despair, fueling ongoing protests across the country. Even though the demonstrations do not threaten the regime, they could further embolden Washington, and further weaken Iran's hand in negotiations. For more, click [here](#).

Russian Warning to NATO

An attempt by NATO to incorporate the former Soviet republic of Georgia could trigger a new, "horrible" conflict, Russia's prime minister said Tuesday in a stern warning to the West, marking 10 years since the Russia-Georgia war. Dmitry Medvedev said in an interview by Russian state television that NATO's plans to eventually offer membership to Georgia are "absolutely irresponsible" and a "threat to peace." The Russian prime minister described NATO's eastward expansion as a major security threat to Russia. Read more [here](#).

Additionally, Russia's currency fell on Thursday to its lowest dollar value in nearly two years, after the United States announced [new sanctions](#) against the country in response to a nerve-agent attack on a former Russian spy in Britain. The decline in the value of the ruble was a clear sign that sanctions

were affecting Russia's economy, which has grown modestly this year on the back of rising oil prices. As tensions rise, it will be interesting to see how events between Russia and the West play out.

Space Force Update

The Pentagon is moving on plans to create a Space Force, a new military service branch centered on space operations. On August 9, Vice President Pence unveiled the Pentagon's plan to set the stage for Space Force, which could be in effect as early as 2020.

That plan involves creating an independent unified combatant command, called U.S. Space Command, which will eventually be led by a four-star general, Pence said.

It also calls for naming an assistant secretary of defense for space that will be in charge of standing up the Department of the U.S. Space Force and could eventually transition to the position of its first service secretary. Read more about updates on the program [here](#).

Airstrikes in Yemen

At least 29 children have been killed and 30 wounded in a Saudi-led coalition [airstrike in Yemen](#), the International Committee of the Red Cross says. The children were travelling on a bus that was hit at a market in Dahyan, in the northern province of Saada.

The strikes are a part of ongoing conflict in the country in which [dozens have died this week](#). The United Nations classifies Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Two-thirds of the nation's 29 million people rely on international aid, and Al Hudaydah is the point of entry for 70 percent of that aid. Tens of thousands of people have been killed in fighting and acute medical crises exacerbated by the civil war, which started in 2015 after power-sharing negotiations broke down.

Look Ahead

With the House on recess, things are winding down here in DC for the time being.

Have a great weekend!