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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 | March 10, 2017

TOP STORIES

STEADY U.S. JOB GROWTH SETS STAGE FOR FED TO RAISE INTEREST RATES. *Employers added 235,000 workers to their payrolls in February, the government reported on Friday, a hefty gain that clears the path for the Federal Reserve to raise its benchmark interest rate when it meets next week. The official jobless rate fell to 4.7 percent, from 4.8 percent in January, while average hourly earnings grew by 0.2 percent in a report that overlaps with President Trump's first full month in office.* *Read more*

PARK GEUN-HYE FIRED AS COURT UPHOLDS IMPEACHMENT. *South Korea's top court has ruled to formally end impeached President Park Geun-hye's rule. Eight judges from the Constitutional Court assembled on Friday to issue a verdict to remove Park from office over a corruption scandal. The ruling sparked protests from hundreds of her supporters, two of whom were killed in clashes with police outside the court.* *Read more*

MCCONNELL HITS BRAKES ON TAX REFORM, DESPITE BULLISH TRUMP TEAM. *Always the policy bridesmaid, tax reform once again is taking a back seat as Congress debates ObamaCare repeal legislation. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Thursday played down expectations that*

any tax package can be completed before the August recess, despite Trump administration vows to pursue “historic” legislation soon. Read more

BULGARIAN VIGILANTES PATROL TURKEY BORDER TO KEEP MIGRANTS OUT. *Figures in camouflage and ski masks gather at a fishing lodge. Many are armed with long knives, bayonets and hatchets. The 35 men and women are on the hunt in Strandzha Massif, a forested mountain range on Bulgaria's border with Turkey. Migrants trying to cross into Europe are their prey.* Read more

ANCIENT PHARAOH STATUES UNCOVERED IN CAIRO MUD PIT. *Archaeologists have found two pharaonic statues dating back more than 3,000 years in a muddy pit in a Cairo suburb. The relics were found in Mattarya district, a site of the pharaonic capital of Heliopolis, one of the oldest cities of ancient Egypt. Today the area is a sprawl of working and middle class districts in northeastern Cairo.* Read more

EU SUMMIT: POLAND WARNS AGAINST MULTI-SPEED BLOC. *It said it faced new divisions if stronger nations tried to integrate more at the expense of weaker ones like Poland and other ex-communist states. Friday's talks focused on the future of the post-Brexit EU. EU members discussed making a joint declaration that should stress EU unity when they meet in Rome on 25 March.* Read more

JUDGE WHO ASKED WOMAN WHY SHE COULDN'T KEEP KNEES TOGETHER RESIGNS. *A Canadian federal judge who asked a woman in a rape trial why she couldn't keep her knees together resigned Thursday after a disciplinary council recommended he be removed from the bench. Judge Robin Camp stepped down before Canada's Parliament could act on the recommendation.* Read more

POPE SIGNALS HE'S OPEN TO MARRIED CATHOLIC MEN BECOMING PRIESTS*. Pope Francis has said he is open to married men becoming priests to combat the Roman Catholic Church's shortage of clergy. In an interview with German newspaper Die Zeit, Pope Francis said the lack of Catholic priests was an "enormous problem" for the Church, and indicated he would be open to a change in the rules governing eligibility for the priesthood.* Read more

ADMINISTRATION

WHAT TRUMP HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN HIS FIRST 50 DAYS. *President Trump has relied heavily on executive power to advance his agenda during an action-packed first 50 days in office. Trump thus far has issued 16 executive orders, roughly on pace with President Obama, who signed 17 by this point in his presidency. Trump has also approved more than a dozen additional memoranda, some containing key policy changes. Read more*

ETHICS OFFICE REMAINS 'CONCERNED' ABOUT CONWAY'S ENDORSEMENT OF IVANKA'S BUSINESS. *The chairman of the Office of Government Ethics said the office remains concerned about Kellyanne Conway's "misuse of position" to promote Ivanka Trump's products and the White House's decision not to discipline her. "Not taking disciplinary action against a senior official under such circumstances risks undermining the ethics program," Chairman Walter Shaub wrote. Read more*

PENCE: FLYNN'S TURKEY TIES 'AFFIRMATION' OF HIS OUSTER. *Michael Flynn's newly disclosed lobbying ties to Turkey bolster President Trump's decision to oust him as national security adviser, Vice President Pence said Thursday. "I think it is an affirmation of the president's decision to ask Gen. Flynn to resign," Pence said in an interview with Fox News. Read more*

CONGRESS

CONSERVATIVE DEMANDS THREATEN TO DERAIL OBAMACARE REPEAL. *Hill conservatives were just handed the opening they've been waiting for: An invitation from President Donald Trump to "negotiate" on an Obamacare replacement. There's just one big problem: They're all over the place on what they want. The discord on the far-right is becoming a real problem for Republicans. Read more*

FEINSTEIN: 'POSSIBILITY' INTEL DEMS COULD SUBPOENA TRUMP TAX RETURNS. *Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) told CNN Thursday that it is a "distinct possibility" that she and other Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee could try to force President Trump to release his tax returns through a subpoena. "We're not there yet, but it's a distinct possibility, yes,'" Manu Raju, CNN's senior congressional reporter, said Feinstein told him Thursday.*

Read more

PELOSI: COMEY SHOULD PUBLICLY REJECT TRUMP WIRETAPPING CLAIMS. *House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi said Friday that FBI director James Comey should publicly disavow President Donald Trump's claim that his predecessor Barack Obama wiretapped his campaign headquarters. "Theoretically, do I think that a director of the FBI who knows for a fact that something is mythology but misleading to the American people and he should set the record straight?" Read more*

POLITICS

TILLERSON WON'T PARTICIPATE IN KEYSTONE REVIEW, STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS. *Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is not participating in matters related to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, the State Department said Thursday. Tillerson, the former CEO of ExxonMobil, recused himself from State's review of the pipeline in February, a Department ethics lawyer wrote in a letter to Greenpeace on Thursday. Read more*

HOUSE GOP LEADERS DEFEND HEALTH-CARE OVERHAUL AS THEY PREPARE TO MEET TRUMP. *House Republican leaders on Friday defended their effort to pass a sweeping overhaul of the Affordable Care Act, as they prepared to meet President Trump at the White House amid mounting criticism from conservatives urging them to go further. The leaders dismissed the suggestion from conservative members that the proposed phase out of the ACA's Medicaid expansion should be moved up by two years — from 2020 to 2018. Read more*

DOJ SENDS 144,000 PAGES OF GORSUCH DOCUMENTS TO SENATE. *The Justice Department has given the Senate more than 144,000 pages of documents regarding Neil Gorsuch's work in the George W. Bush administration, fulfilling an unusual request from the leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee ahead of the Supreme Court nominee's confirmation hearing later this month. Read more*

DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

IRAN SUCCESSFULLY TESTS BALLISTIC MISSILE. *Iran's Revolutionary*

Guard has successfully tested a ballistic missile, Iran's semi-official Fars news agency reported Thursday. The report quotes Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, chief of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division, as saying the missile destroyed a target from a distance of 250 kilometers (155 miles). It said the sea-launched ballistic missile, dubbed Hormuz 2, was tested last week. Read more

U.S. DEPLOYS HEAVILY ARMED MARINES TO SYRIA. *Several hundred Marines have deployed into Syria with artillery as part of the ongoing preparation for the fight to push ISIL out of its self-declared headquarters of Raqqa, a Pentagon spokesman has confirmed. The Marines are pre-positioning howitzers to be ready to assist local Syrian forces, according to US officials. Read more*

NETANYAHU PRODS PUTIN OVER IRANIAN ALLIES IN SYRIA. *With Israel's head of military intelligence at his side, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Thursday with Russian President Vladimir Putin to present "detailed" information attesting to Iranian attempts to establish a permanent military presence in Syria — something the Israeli leader said his country will never accept along its northern border. Read more*

ECONOMY AND FINANCE

TRUMP PROMISED $1 TRILLION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT THE ESTIMATED NEED IS $4.6 TRILLION. *The Trump administration promises to pump $1 trillion into improving the country's crumbling infrastructure, but a benchmark report says it will take almost $4.6 trillion over the next eight years to bring all those systems up to an acceptable standard. Read more*

U.S. CONSUMER COMFORT JUST REACHED ITS HIGHEST LEVEL IN A DECADE. *Americans' confidence continued to mount last week as the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index reached the highest point in a decade on more-upbeat assessments about the economy and buying climate, figures showed Thursday. Read more*

WINE BAR SUES DONALD TRUMP FOR UNFAIR COMPETITION OVER D.C. HOTEL. *A Washington restaurant filed an unfair competition lawsuit Thursday against President Donald Trump and the company that runs his D.C. hotel, claiming he's siphoning away customers who hope to "curry favor" with*

his administration. Cork Wine Bar, a well-reviewed eatery about 1.5 miles from the $200 million Trump International Hotel, is suing Trump as a private businessman and not as president, but suggests that he could remedy the problem by resigning. Read more

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

EPA CHIEF CLINGS TO HIS OWN FANTASY BY DENYING OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE ON CO2 AND CLIMATE CHANGE. *Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, told CNBC's Squawk Box today that he doesn't believe carbon dioxide is a primary contributor to global warming. That's at odds with the view of government agencies like NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Read more*

BY 2030, HALF THE WORLD'S OCEANS COULD BE REELING FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, SCIENTISTS SAY. *The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is withdrawing its request that oil and gas drillers provide regulators with information about methane emissions. Under former President Obama, officials had asked drillers to give the EPA data about methane emissions and equipment at existing oil and gas wells. Read more*

SHELL CEO URGES SWITCH TO CLEAN ENERGY AS PLANS HEFTY RENEWABLE SPENDING. *The oil and gas industry risks losing public support if progress is not made in the transition to cleaner energy, Royal Dutch Shell Plc Chief Executive Ben van Beurden said on Thursday. The world's second largest publicly-traded oil company plans to increase its investment in renewable energy to $1 billion a year by the end of the decade, van Beurden said, although it is still a small part of its total annual spending of $25 billion. Read more*

TECHNOLOGY

WIKILEAKS 'TO SHARE CIA HACKING TOOLS' WITH TECH FIRMS. *WikiLeaks will hand over details of hacking secrets used by the CIA to technology companies to allow them to find software flaws and fix them, founder Julian Assange has said. Speaking during a press conference broadcast via Facebook Live, Assange on Thursday promised to give exclusive access to tech manufacturers after the latest document dump, which included allegations that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) hacked into smartphones*

and computers. Read more

AIRBUS SWEARS ITS POD/CAR/DRONE IS A SERIOUS IDEA DEFINITELY. *Air travel never involves air travel alone. City to city transport usually goes something like car or cab to train to shuttle to the terminal where you catch a plane, only to reverse the process at the other end, often with a little running somewhere along the line for good measure.* Read more

ELON MUSK PROMISES AUSTRALIA A HUGE NEW BATTERY FARM IN LESS THAN 100 DAYS OR IT'S FREE. *Elon Musk has promised to solve ongoing power problems in the state of South Australia by committing to build a 100MW battery storage farm, and promising that if he couldn't provide the system within 100 days, he would give it to the state for free. The Tesla CEO made the promise on Twitter, replying to Atlassian CEO and Australian billionaire Mike Cannon-Brookes.* Read more