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**Subject:** EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | March 31, 2017  
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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 31, 2017

## TOP STORIES

**'EL CHAPO' ARREST SPARKS HOMICIDE SURGE AS FACTIONS FIGHT TO FILL VACUUM.** Last year's capture of Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman led to a surge in homicides in Mexico as cartel leaders fought to fill the vacuum created by his arrest. The apprehension of Guzman in January 2016 was hailed by Mexican and U.S. officials as a watershed moment in the war on drugs. [Read more](#)

**DEFENSE SEC. JAMES MATTIS: NORTH KOREA 'HAS GOT TO BE STOPPED'.** After years of North Korea thumbing its nose at the international community, on Friday Defense Secretary James Mattis appeared to signal enough was enough. "Right now, [North Korea] appears to be going in a very reckless manner ... and that has got to be stopped," Mattis said at a press conference in London. [Read more](#)

**ISRAEL BLASTED FOR APPROVING EMEK SHILO SETTLEMENT.** Israel's government has approved the building of the first new settlement in 20 years in the occupied West Bank - a move swiftly condemned as an obstacle to peace based on a two-state solution. The move late on Thursday - considered illegal under international law - was adopted less than a week after the United Nations [criticized Israel](#) for not taking any steps to halt settlement building.

[Read more](#)

**BREXIT FALLOUT: EU DRAFT GUIDELINES SOFTEN PUBLIC STANCE ON FUTURE UK RELATIONSHIP.** The European Union softened its public stance on Britain's exit from the bloc Friday, with Council President Donald Tusk signaling some flexibility on allowing talks on a new relationship before the divorce proceedings are complete. Draft guidelines obtained by the Associated Press say that the EU and Britain must first "settle the disentanglement" of Britain from the bloc. [Read more](#)

**INDIA, LONG AT ODDS WITH PAKISTAN, MAY BE RETHINKING NUCLEAR FIRST STRIKES.** [India](#) may be reinterpreting its [nuclear weapons](#) doctrine, circumstantial evidence suggests, with potentially significant ramifications for the already tenuous nuclear balance in South Asia. New assessments suggest that India is considering allowing for pre-emptive nuclear strikes against Pakistan's arsenal in the event of a war. [Read more](#)

**UN EXPERTS RAISE ALERT OVER 'ALARMING' U.S. STATE BILLS.**

Nineteen U.S. states have introduced bills that would curb freedom of expression and the right to protest since Donald Trump's election as president, an "alarming and undemocratic" trend, UN human rights investigators say. Maina Kiai and David Kaye, independent UN experts on freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, said on Thursday the moves were incompatible with international human rights law. [Read more](#)

**FLYNN AND NUNES FALLOUT OVER RUSSIA PROBE GROWS OMINOUS FOR TRUMP WHITE HOUSE.** The fallout over Russian election interference, which had already become a major distraction for a flailing Trump White House, has grown more ominous. First, a story the White House had embraced as a shield — that House Intelligence Committee chairman Devin Nunes got secret intelligence information from a "whistleblower" that "somewhat" vindicated Donald Trump's discredited claim that his predecessor wiretapped him — unraveled. [Read more](#)

## ADMINISTRATION

**TRUMP SET TO SIGN EXECUTIVE ORDERS TO STOP TRADE ABUSES.** President Trump on Friday is expected to sign two executive orders aimed at

tackling long-standing concerns around trade enforcement as the White House launches plans to redefine U.S. policy. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and National Trade Council Director Peter Navarro said the Trump administration will produce a sweeping report on the cause of U.S. trade deficits. [Read more](#)

**TRUMP NOMINATES OFFICIALS FOR VA, BORDER CONTROL.** The White House announced Thursday the Trump administration's nominees for a top border security position and for a senior post in the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Trump administration picked John Ulyot to serve as assistant secretary of Veterans' Affairs. Ulyot served on President Trump's campaign and transition teams while he worked as a managing partner at Brighton Strategy Group. [Read more](#)

**2 JOURNALISTS SUE TRUMP OVER 'KILL LIST'.** Two journalists who believe they are on the so-called "kill list" of individuals targeted by the U.S. for deadly drone strikes are suing President Donald Trump and other top administration officials. Former Al Jazeera Islamabad bureau chief Ahmad Zaidan and freelance journalist Bilal Kareem filed a lawsuit Thursday in U.S. District Court in Washington, contending that they were erroneously placed on the "kill list". [Read more](#)

## CONGRESS

**FREEDOM CAUCUS RECKONS WITH WRATH OF TRUMP.** The Freedom Caucus is in soul searching mode. After scuttling the Republican plan to repeal and replace Obamacare, the group of hard-liners has been attacked on Twitter by President Donald Trump and trashed privately by much of the House Republican Conference. [Read more](#)

**SENATE INTEL PANEL TELLS WH TO SEND RUSSIA INFORMATION DIRECTLY.** Senate Intelligence Committee leaders are urging the White House to turn documents related to their Russia investigation directly over to the panel, seemingly declining an invitation to examine intelligence reports at the White House. [Read more](#)

**RYAN: 'WE'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN'.** With a deadline looming next month for legislation to keep the government funded, House Speaker Paul Ryan offered a guarantee in an interview that

aired Thursday that there will not be a government shutdown. Congress is facing an April 28 deadline to pass legislation funding the government through the end of September. [Read more](#)

## POLITICS

**DEMOCRATS AIM TO TAKE OUT CRUZ IN 2018.** The road to a Democratic Senate majority in 2018 runs through Texas — yes, Texas. Facing a grim midterm map, Democrats are desperately trying to put enough GOP-held seats in play to take advantage of Donald Trump's unpopularity and carve a credible path back to Senate control. [Read more](#)

**WITH VICE PRESIDENT PENCE BREAKING TIE, SENATE PASSES ANTI-PLANNED PARENTHOOD BILL.** Vice President Pence cast a tie-breaking Senate vote Thursday to pass legislation that will allow states to withhold federal funds from Planned Parenthood and other health care providers that perform abortions. The measure, which now goes to President Trump for his signature, dismisses an Obama-era rule banning states from denying federal funds to such organizations. [Read more](#)

**TWO DEMOCRATIC SENATORS BACK GORSUCH, BUT CAN'T SWAY COLLEAGUES.** Two Democratic senators from solidly Republican states announced their support on Thursday for President Trump's [Supreme Court](#) pick, Judge Neil M. Gorsuch, giving the nominee a measure of bipartisan sheen but doing little to dissuade leading Democrats from planning to block him. The lawmakers — Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia and Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota. [Read more](#)

## DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**DOD WEAPONS DESIGNER: SWARMING TEAMS OF DRONES WILL DOMINATE FUTURE WARS.** Future wars will be fought with swarms of expendable, disaggregated, intelligent systems rather than the big, expensive weapon platforms the U.S. has relied on for fifty years, a top Pentagon weapons scientist asserted this week. William Roper, the lead of the Pentagon's semi-secret Strategic Capabilities Office (SCO), made his prediction March 28. [Read more](#)

## **PRESIDENT TRUMP RENEWS DECLARATION OF CYBERSECURITY**

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY.** President Trump informed Congress Wednesday that he will continue the cybersecurity national emergency first declared by then-President Obama in 2015. According to [the National Emergencies Act](#), the president must declare a continuation of a national emergency within 90 days prior to its termination, otherwise it is automatically terminated. [Read more](#)

**ISRAEL REPORTS UPSWING IN DEFENSE SALES.** Israel's Defense Ministry reported Wednesday that Israeli firms signed \$6.5 billion in new export contracts for 2016, an \$800 million rise above previous-year levels and an indication of an upward trend after a disappointing \$5.6 billion in 2014. [Read more](#)

## **ECONOMY AND FINANCE**

**EARNINGS GROWTH MAY BE BEST SINCE LATE 2011.** The first quarter officially ends on Friday. Big companies will start releasing their latest results and outlooks in the middle of April. And the numbers should be very good. According to estimates from FactSet, companies in the S&P 500 are expected to report an earnings increase of 9.1% from a year ago. If that actually happens, it would be the best quarter of growth in more than five years. [Read more](#)

**HOW A 1924 LAW COULD UNVEIL TRUMP TAXES.** Congress has the authority to obtain and reveal the confidential tax information of any taxpayer, including the president, without the taxpayer's consent. Democrats have made many attempts to get Congress to use that authority to obtain President Trump's tax returns. More than a million people have signed a [White House petition](#) asking for the same information. [Read more](#)

**U.S. DEBT TO DOUBLE OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS.** Considering President Trump's push for big tax cuts and a promise not to touch key drivers of the debt, the picture could worsen. Right now the nation's debt amounts to 77% of GDP. That's already the highest level since the post-World War II era. If current law remains in effect, it's on track to jump to 150% by 2047, according to the latest long-term budget projections from the CBO. [Read more](#)

## ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

### **TRUMP TO DECIDE BY LATE MAY WHETHER TO STAY IN PARIS**

**CLIMATE PACT.** President Trump is planning to decide by late May on whether the U.S. should stay in the Paris climate change agreement, the White House announced Thursday. White House press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters at his daily briefing that White House aides “are currently reviewing issues related to the agreement.” [Read more](#)

**MELTING SEA ICE MAY LEAD TO MORE LIFE IN THE SEA.** When spring arrives in the Arctic, both snow and sea ice melt, forming melt ponds on the surface of the sea ice. Every year, as global warming increases, there are more and larger melt ponds. Melt ponds provide more light and heat for the ice and the underlying water, but now it turns out that they may also have a more direct and potentially important influence on life in the Arctic waters. [Read more](#)

**SPACEX EVEN LANDED THE NOSE CONE FROM ITS HISTORIC USED FALCON 9 ROCKET LAUNCH.** SpaceX had one more victory this evening in its historical reuse of a rocket: it also landed the nose cone on top of the rocket that surrounds the payload to keep it safe, called a fairing. This is a first for SpaceX. You can think of the fairing like a hard protective bubble atop the rocket. [Read more](#)

## TECHNOLOGY

**SWISS HOSPITALS WILL START USING DRONES TO EXCHANGE LAB SAMPLES.** A pair of hospitals in the Swiss city of Lugano have been testing the use of drones to transport laboratory samples. Since mid-March, logistics company Swiss Post has operated more than 70 test flights between the two hospitals, and announced today that it plans to establish a regular service by 2018. [Read more](#)

**APPLE, GOOGLE, MICROSOFT AND AMAZON WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE DESPITE TRUMP’S ORDER.** Apple, Amazon, Google and Microsoft say they will continue their efforts to combat climate change, Bloomberg reports, even after President Donald Trump signed a sweeping executive order that will undo a series of climate regulations put in place by the Obama administration. [Read more](#)

**MARCO RUBIO SAYS HACK ATTEMPTS FROM RUSSIA TARGETED HIM, TOO.** Hillary Clinton may not have been the only Trump opponent who came into the sights of Russian hackers during the 2016 election. According to testimony in a Senate hearing today, so did one of President Trump's Republican primary adversaries: Senator Marco Rubio. In a hearing of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Rubio revealed for the first time that his campaign staffers were also targeted by hackers seemingly based in Russia.

[Read more](#)



# Hampton Roads e-Newsletter

March 2017 - Vol 8, Issue 3

## Communications & Education Staff

(click name to contact)

Joe Turner  
Communications Manager

Katie Cullipher  
Principal Environmental Education

Rebekah Eastep  
Environmental Education Planner II

## Upcoming Meetings

[Director of Utilities](#)  
**April Meeting Cancelled**

[Regional Environmental Committee](#)  
**April Meeting Cancelled**

[HRPDC](#)  
12:30pm  
Thurs., April 20, 2017  
Regional Board Room  
723 Woodlake Drive  
Chesapeake, VA 23320

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*The HRPDC continually monitors events and activities that impact the quality of life in Hampton Roads. We are pleased to present the following information and analysis for your information and use.*

## Hampton Roads Economic Monthly

### Economic Indicators Paint a Positive Future for Hampton Roads

This month's report features the strongest set of economic indicators for the region since 2010. Hampton Roads' employment grew in January (with upwards revisions to previous estimates) and the unemployment rate fell even as the labor force grew. Permitting and initial unemployment claims remained constant, while pressure from foreclosures continued to (slowly) decline. While the Hampton Roads economy remains fragile, and especially susceptible to swings in defense spending/employment, the most recent data suggests the region could realign with national levels of growth. [READ MORE](#)

### Hampton Roads Projected Return to Peak Employment



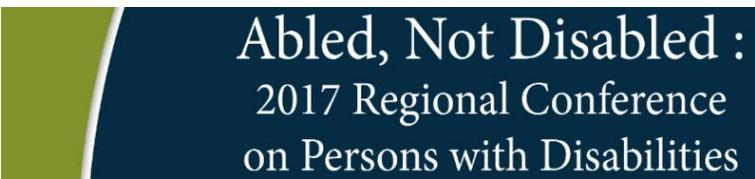
The 2017 Great American Cleanup is Underway!



Hampton Roads volunteers will be out in full force working across the region to pick up roadside litter, clean up beaches and shorelines, improve community parks and more. [READ MORE](#)



Nearly 200 Attend Regional Conference on Persons with Disabilities



Nearly 200 local and regional leaders, service providers and industry stakeholders descended upon Old Dominion University's Webb Center March 9, 2017, for the Hampton Roads Disabilities Board's Abled, Not Disabled: 2017 Regional Conference on Persons with Disabilities. [READ MORE](#)



The HRPDC strives to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate in public involvement opportunities. Contact the Communications Manager at (757) 420-8300 for more information.

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