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Weekly Must-Reads in the Press, September 28, 2018

Here we are again with our weekly news update. We know that you are busy people, and you probably do have a lot of news to sift through, online, on social media, on news feeds. But we will bring you a weekly update of news we curate from major news sources that may be of interest to you. We may even be able to introduce you to some new news sources you will enjoy exploring.

So read these on your devices, or print them out for your morning coffee reading this weekend. (We do not expect you will read these all at once: this is slow news, not Facebook news. So explore, linger, and share with friends—we mean share the links with actual, physical, real friends!)

The Kavanaugh Hearing: A brief summary

Certainly our country is at a crossroads. We have attempted to keep up with the Thursday Judiciary Committee hearing on the Kavanaugh nomination and the press responses. The fate of the nomination, of the Supreme Court, and perhaps of candidates in the midterm election seem to hang in the balance. As we write on Friday morning, Senator Flake of Arizona had announced that he will support Kavanaugh. The nomination passed the committee and may be voted on within days by the full Senate

Update Friday noon: Flake has this afternoon said he would vote to pass Kavanaugh on; but his vote in the full Senate is conditional on a week's delay while the FBI conducts an investigation. There is no clear commitment to this yet by the Republican leadership or by the White House (which must actually make the request). In a stunning moment caught on video, Flake was confronted by two women who protested his vote. Watch it [here](#).

In an extraordinary editorial posted Thursday night, the Editorial Board of our National Newspaper of Record, *The New York Times*, headlined, boldly, "**Why Brett Kavanaugh Wasn't Believable: And why Christine Blasey Ford was.**" *The Times* takes a firm stand: "Where Christine Blasey Ford was calm and dignified, Brett Kavanaugh was volatile and belligerent; where she was eager to respond

fully to every questioner, and kept worrying whether she was being ‘helpful’ enough, he was openly contemptuous of several senators; most important, where she was credible and unshakable at every point in her testimony, he was at some points evasive, and some of his answers strained credulity....

“Judge Kavanaugh’s defiant fury might be understandable coming from someone who believes himself innocent of the grotesque charges he’s facing. Yet it was also evidence of an unsettling temperament in a man trying to persuade the nation of his judicial demeanor.... Judge Kavanaugh clumsily dodged a number of times when senators asked him about his drinking habits. When Senator Amy Klobuchar gently pressed him about whether he’d ever blacked out from drinking, he at first wouldn’t reply directly. “I don’t know, have you?” he replied — a condescending and dismissive response to the legitimate exercise of a senator’s duty of advise and consent. (Later, after a break in the hearing, he apologized.)

“Judge Kavanaugh gave categorical denials a number of times, including, at other points, that he’d ever blacked out from too much drinking. Given numerous reports now of his heavy drinking in college, such a blanket denial is hard to believe. In contrast, Dr. Blasey bolstered her credibility not only by describing in harrowing detail what she did remember, but by being honest about what she didn’t — like the exact date of the gathering, or the address of the house where it occurred. As she pointed out, the precise details of a trauma get burned into the brain and stay there long after less relevant details fade away.” **Highly recommended reading. We most strongly urge our readers to click through to this essay, which is a beautifully-written and clear-headed evaluation of the testimony — striking from a newspaper that used to be called “The Gray Lady.”* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/opinion/why-brett-kavanaugh-wasnt-believable.html>

The testimony of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford was indeed riveting and moving. Even Republican Senators had been careful not to attack her, for obvious political reasons. Given her unshakable demeanor and compellingly honest testimony, their chosen strategy in this matter was to blame the Democrats for somehow setting up an unfair process.

Reaction in the press was immediate. By the time our readers see this Must-Read, there will be much news commentary and reaction both to the testimony and to Republican claims of a Democratic set-up to derail the nomination.

We cannot, in a reasonable time, summarize all this data. But for now, we can only suggest that readers daily consult *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and CNN.com. That may be obvious, but we cannot here be up-to-the minute with our curating. For what it is worth, here is the summary of

CNN.com, which you can consult for minute-by-minute summary: <https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/kavanaugh-ford-sexual-assault-hearing/index.html>.

A good summary of Ford's testimony, from Thursday afternoon, is in *The Washington Post*, here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/kavanaugh-hearing-christine-blasey-ford-to-give-senate-testimony-about-sexual-assault-allegation/2018/09/27/fc216170-c1c3-11e8-b338-a3289f6cb742_story.html.

For the record, here are both Ford's and Kavanaugh's opening statements, with key points highlighted by *The Washington Post*: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/09/26/seared-into-my-memory-christine-blasey-fords-opening-statement-senate-annotated/>; and <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/09/26/i-have-never-sexually-assaulted-anyone-brett-kavanaughs-testimony-congress-annotated/>.

As far as the politics of this are likely to play out, here is the quick-take from *The New York Times* just after the hearings on Thursday: "Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, was asked what he thought of Dr. Blasey's testimony; he replied, 'I think most people listen to Professor Ford and think that she believes what she is saying.' Asked if he believes her, Mr. Johnson replied: 'I think she believes what she is saying.'

"Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican, shrugged off Dr. Blasey's testimony, telling reporters, 'It's exactly what I expected; it's basically repeating what we've already been told.'

"Senator Graham delivered a threat to Democrats: 'If this is the new norm, you better watch out for your nominees.'" <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/us/politics/kavanaugh-hearings-dr-ford.html>

Graham also said, in a hallway interview reported by ABC News, that he was going to give Kavanaugh the benefit of the doubt, since, while something may have happened to Blasey Ford, there is not enough corroboration for him to reach a conclusion: "Unless something new comes forward, you have just an emotional accusation and an emotional denial without corroboration,' Graham said." <https://abcnews4.com/news/nation-world/graham-ford-testimony-hasnt-changed-support-for-kavanaugh-nomination>. We can expect this to be the ongoing reasoning of Republican Kavanaugh supporters.

Another summary by *The Post's* Amber Philips summarized the Ford testimony just after it happened but before Kavanaugh testified. It is worth reading: "**1. This isn't going well for Republicans** [emphasis in original].... [Committee Chair

Charles] Grassley was directing most of his ire at Democrats, but with most cable news split screens showing Grassley questioning Ford's account and a terrified-looking Ford, it felt very adversarial toward Ford. Grassley didn't mention that Ford told the four people about her allegations before Kavanaugh was nominated to the Supreme Court. (That's a key litmus test that sex-crimes prosecutors use to determine a witness's credibility.)

“2. Meanwhile, Ford came across as credible, emotional and sympathetic [emphasis in original].... As Ford cut a sympathetic figure, she rebutted three main arguments against her case: 1. That she and Democrats waited until the last minute to share her story in an effort to tank Kavanaugh's nomination: Ford said that she was conflicted about whether to share her secret but that as Kavanaugh's nomination became more of a certainty, she felt even more obligated to speak out.... 2. That she has political intent: Ford is a registered Democrat, but she made sure to say this in her opening remarks: 'I am an independent person, and I am no one's pawn' 3. That she isn't credible because she can't remember the details about the party aside from the attack, like where and when it happened. Here, Ford's psychology background strengthened her case. 'The same way that I'm sure I'm talking to you right now,' she said confidently when Feinstein asked how **she was '100 percent certain' that Kavanaugh was the one who assaulted her [emphasis added]**

“3. Republicans' decision to hand their questions over to a female prosecutor is seeming questionable [emphasis in original].... But as Mitchell was trying to do her job, Republicans' reluctance to question Ford themselves only grew more conspicuous. That's especially the case when compared with Democrats taking their turns to speak to praise Ford and bash Republicans for not allowing an FBI investigation into her claims first or to call key witnesses, such as Kavanaugh acquaintance Mark Judge or the person who administered Ford's polygraph test.” Read this brief but informative summary here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/09/27/takeaways-kavanaugh-hearing-so-far>.

The above may explain why the Republicans abandoned the strategy of using the female prosecutor to ask the questions and began politicizing the event itself. Hence the memorable meltdown of Lindsey Graham. As reported by *The Post*, **“Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), one of Kavanaugh's most adamant defenders as he faced the allegations of sexual misconduct, ripped Democrats in a furious speech for engaging in the 'most unethical sham' he's seen in his entire political career. And facing directly toward Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), who has not announced how he will vote, Graham vowed: 'To my Republican colleagues, if you vote "no," you're legitimizing the most despicable thing I have seen in my time in politics.'”** [emphasis added]

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/kavanaugh-hearing-christine-blasey-ford-to-give-senate-testimony-about-sexual-assault-allegation/2018/09/27/fc216170-c1c3-11e8-b338-a3289f6cb742_story.html

But the politicization of the process was underlined by the viciously partisan, indeed unprecedented partisanship, of the nominee himself in his opening Trump-ventriloquist attacks on a Democratic conspiracy of Hillary-ites. On Friday morning, CNN reported that Sen. Patrick Leahy, “a Democrat from Vermont, said the Senate and its Judiciary Committee are no longer the ‘independent branch of government’ they’re supposed to be. **Instead, it’s ‘an arm — and a very weak arm — of the Trump White House,’ he said.**” [emphasis in original] https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/kavanaugh-senate-committee-vote/h_f1935a7004e5a1101f117d0b9f13ba44

Below we will look at one reason why this has happened (if your guess was money in politics, that would be one important element in this debacle.)

We now return to our regularly-scheduled Must-Read.

1. Let us step back from the roiling tumult around the current Supreme Court nomination. **We offer you this essay on the fall of the Court into an agent of the creation of a “Bosses’ Constitution,”** as the First Amendment is “weaponized” to attack workers and the poor to the advantage of employers and businesses. And of course this also the ground of the control of legislatures by moneyed interests so that both the laws themselves and their interpretation by the courts would be favorable to big business.

This is the argument of Jedediah Purdy, Professor of Law at Duke University, in an essay in the Sep. 12 issue of *The Nation*. He begins with the recent *Janus v. ASCME* decision, where the Court decided that public employees who do not belong to a union do not have to pay dues to the union, even though, exempted from paying dues in full, they nevertheless had to pay for collective bargaining from which non-union employees benefit. The Court decided that this violated the non-union members’ First Amendment rights.

Purdy points out that “Though couched in the neutral terms of the First Amendment, the Court’s ruling wasn’t just about free speech; it had clear partisan implications. The decision is likely to result in a hit to union coffers, both weakening workers’ power and dampening union support for Democrats and public spending. But as Kagan made clear in her dissent, the stakes were even higher. Over the last decade, the Supreme Court has used the First Amendment as a justification for slashing regulations and protecting private economic power.”

Further, this sort of decision is not without precedent, Purdy reminds us. The First Amendment was used in *Citizens United*, of course. But it was also the basis of the 1976 *Buckley v. Vallejo* decision that gutted the Watergate-era campaign finance reform bills. Purdy says, “All of these rulings are part and parcel of the libertarian right’s attack on the redistributive state. But there is also a larger ambition at work here: to tilt the scales of capitalist democracy by hindering the capacity of democratic politics to reshape the market and assert the equality of citizens against the vast disparities of rich and poor. In so doing, the Court has recast the Constitution’s core principles of personal freedom, equality, and democratic accountability to entrench the power of employers and the wealthy. **A Court that once advanced a modest but real egalitarianism by supporting desegregation, voting rights, and criminal-justice reform is now creating a Bosses’ Constitution.**” [emphasis added]

Purdy provides a good history of the Court’s post-War swing as it became the protector of “free enterprise,” going back to Justice Lewis Powell. “The gap between the reality of class entrenchment and the Supreme Court’s rhapsodizing about political spending as the heart of self-rule is what makes the weaponized First Amendment ideological in the worst sense. **This jurisprudence actively obscures how class entrenchment in America’s legislative branch poses a threat to democratic self-rule. By doing so, it also deepens the problem, both by denying the existence of the basic conflict in capitalist democracies between organized money and organized people, and by taking a side in that conflict to protect and increase money’s power.**” [emphasis added] Read this illuminating history lesson on how the Court got to this partisan place, in *The Nation* magazine (no firewall): <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-bosses-constitution/>. **Highly recommended reading*

2. A. Almost overlooked in the press this week, a story with huge implications for legal immigrants here and working their way to citizenship, concerns the new guidelines proposed for **denying green cards to immigrants who use just about any government social service**. But the UK *Guardian* has been reporting on US immigration policy in some depth. On Saturday the paper reported, “The [Trump administration](#) on Saturday said it would propose making it harder for foreigners living in the United States to qualify for permanent US residency if they have received public benefits such as food aid, public housing or Medicaid.

“The proposed regulation from the Department of Homeland Security would instruct immigration officers to consider whether a person has received a range of taxpayer-funded benefits to which they are legally entitled in determining whether a potential immigrant is likely to become a public burden.

[US immigration](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/23/trump-officials-move-to-restrict-immigrants-who-use-public-benefits) law has long required officials to exclude a person likely to become a 'public charge' from permanent residence. But guidelines in place for nearly two decades narrowly define 'public charge' to be a person 'primarily dependent on the government for subsistence,' either through direct cash assistance or government-funded long-term care." <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/23/trump-officials-move-to-restrict-immigrants-who-use-public-benefits>

B. Indeed, as *The Guardian* followed up on Thursday, "**US immigrants have begun to remove themselves from public housing waiting lists, childcare subsidy programs and the food stamp program** – out of fears that a rule [proposed on Saturday night](#) could jeopardize their immigration status.... [emphasis added]

"Alison Hirsh of the service union 32BJ SEIU, which has 163,000 members, said: 'The proposed "public charge" rule is a shameful attempt to punish working-class immigrants for accessing the healthcare, housing and nutrition programs they need to support their families and survive in our country.'

"Douglas Rand, who worked on immigration policy in the Obama White House, said the rule was 'a breathtakingly ambitious attempt to [reshape the legal immigration system](#) without an act of Congress.' He said: 'Never in our history have we in this country said you have to be middle class to be an American. Never have we ever said you have to be in perfect health, you have to have a completely spotless credit history, you have to be working age – these are all huge departures from precedent.'" Read the details of the impact the proposed rule is already having on *legal* immigrants, here: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/27/us-immigrants-trump-proposals-rule-public-charge>.

C. And in Thursday's *Washington Post*, Goleen Samari, a demographer at Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California, San Francisco, wrote: "**Denying access to public needs programs for a significant segment of the population is a looming public-health crisis....** [emphasis added] Limiting access to social programs decimates the health and well-being of immigrant families. Health resources include health care and insurance, but also jobs, education, social capital and social services — all of which fundamentally support health. DHS itself acknowledges the potential damaging effects, noting in the proposed rule that lack of enrollment in public programs [could lead to worse health outcomes](#), especially for pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants and children." https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trumps-latest-immigration-proposal-is-a-looming-public-health-crisis/2018/09/27/f9545b42-c285-11e8-8f06-009b39c3f6dd_story.html

3. A. Last week, as *The Washington Post* reported, **“U.S. slashes the number of refugees it will allow into the country.”** This is what happened: “The United States will admit no more than 30,000 refugees in the coming fiscal year, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday, the lowest number in decades and a steep cut from the 45,000 allowed in this year.

“The [new number](#) is a small fraction of one percentage point of the almost 69 million displaced people in the world today. But Pompeo said the United States remains the most generous nation when other U.S. aid to refugees is taken into account, including funds to shelter and feed refugees in camps closer to their home countries....

“In his first year in office, Trump set the cap at 50,000, before cutting it to 45,000, and now again by a third. According to the International Rescue Committee, the number of refugee admissions is down dramatically for Christians, Muslims, Yazidis and Rohingya. At the end of last month, just 60 refugees from Syria had been allowed into the United States this year despite an ongoing war that has displaced millions of citizens and caused a refugee crisis in neighboring countries.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-slashes-the-number-of-refugees-it-will-allow-into-the-country/2018/09/17/a26f398a-bac1-11e8-bdc0-90f81cc58c5d_story.html

B. And on Sunday, *The Chicago Tribune* featured an excellent article on how these new limits are affecting Chicago aid agencies. **“Refugee agencies in Illinois and around the country are fighting to stay functioning and relevant as the Trump administration announces the lowest refugee admissions cap in U.S. history. Refugees in Chicago, many of whom are already dealing with grief and trauma, have new worries of reuniting with their families.”** [emphasis in original]

The paper continues, “As the number of refugees permitted to enter the United States has fallen, the agencies that serve them have atrophied. And with the decline, the United States has abandoned its longtime role as a global leader in refugee resettlement. Advocates worry that the world’s most vulnerable will no longer be able to seek refuge here, in a country of immigrants....

“It’s certainly, I think, part of an overall dismantling of the resettlement program,” said Jessica Schaffer, director of HIAS Chicago, which was forced to end its resettlement services after the State Department’s directive. “If there are no people coming, then you’re not getting those dollars, and there’s no way for you to maintain the infrastructure of your program or your agency.”

Moreover, “HIAS Chicago wasn’t alone. **Of the 50 local affiliates of national agencies affected by the department’s decision, six stopped placement altogether, and 21 chose to suspend placement for the rest of the fiscal year,** [emphasis added] a State Department spokeswoman said. As of July 5, there were 268 local affiliates nationwide.... World Relief Chicago has seen its funding drop by about \$300,000, said John Barcanic, the agency’s executive director. If something doesn’t change soon, more staff and office space will be in jeopardy.” Read this urgent story of need and need denied, right here in Chicago, with stories of individual refugees’ struggles, here: <http://graphics.chicagotribune.com/refugee-agency-struggles/>.

4. A. For some perspective on the two stories above, we turn to an essay in Thursday’s *Washington Post* by Carly Goodman, a historian of immigration and American foreign relations and a Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow and communications analyst at the American Friends Service Committee. She headlines, “**The shadowy network shaping Trump’s anti-immigration policies: Interconnected anti-immigrant organizations have long hidden behind neutral names while pushing nativist policies.**” She writes that in the fall, nativists have put on the ballot in Oregon a measure to repeal the state’s 31-year-old sanctuary law, “one that restricts the use of state and local resources to enforce federal immigration laws and protects community members from profiling based on their perceived immigration status. If it passes, the message to immigrant communities across the state will be clear: You are neither safe nor welcome here.”

She points out that “The group leading the battle to overturn Oregon’s sanctuary law — Oregonians for Immigration Reform (OFIR) — [is supported by](#) the country’s most powerful anti-immigrant organizations. But few people are aware that these groups don’t just lobby for greater enforcement of immigration laws. Instead, they have a widespread, [radical agenda](#) and are part of a shadowy network with deep ties to white-supremacist groups, built by the godfather of the anti-immigrant movement: John Tanton.” Goodman discusses Tanton’s long involvement in anti-immigrant movements, “built on eugenicist thinking, with aims to limit the birthrate of people deemed undesirable. His innovation was to focus on stabilizing the American population by severely limiting immigration.”

Tanton first worked to limit non-white immigration on the grounds that the higher birthrate of Latin Americans would swamp white culture. But he soon backed away from overt racism to concentrate on an “English-only” movement that dog-whistled the idea well enough. He founded a number of organizations attacking immigration from different angles: “Suddenly there were multiple, seemingly independent organizations to push extreme positions into the political debate and media coverage.... The existence of so many organizations — even if they were

quietly interconnected — helped make their ideas and policy preferences appear widely held....

“Now Trump has pulled former staffers from Tanton’s groups into positions of power, where they are making FAIR and CIS [Tanton’s Center for Immigration Studies] policy priorities a [reality](#), from cutting refugee admissions to historic lows to increasing deportations to targeting immigrants who use any public benefits.” [emphasis added] Goodman documents the influence his groups have had, directly or indirectly on Steve Bannon, Ann Coulter, and (lately) Tucker Carlson. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/09/27/shadowy-network-shaping-trumps-anti-immigration-policies/>

5. More on nativism and moves to block “illegals” from voting: Back in July 2017, *Mother Jones* magazine reported on one of Trump’s appointments to his now-defunct election integrity commission, one “J. Christian Adams, an attorney who has [spearheaded efforts to purge voter rolls](#) across the country. Over the past year, Adams has published two reports alleging widespread voter fraud in Virginia.

[“Alien Invasion in Virginia](#) and [Alien Invasion II](#) claim that more than 5,500 noncitizens have registered to vote in Virginia. Of these, the reports found that 1,852 cast nearly 7,500 ballots over last few decades. Produced by the Public Interest Legal Foundation [PILF], the nonprofit law firm where Adams is president and general counsel, and a conservative group called the Virginia Voters Alliance, the reports argue that these ballots could have thrown several close elections in Virginia in recent years. The reports, which use UFO-themed covers and space-alien clip art, were covered by Fox News and other conservative media outlets. [Note: these reports are unverified and contested; there is an ongoing lawsuit claiming defamation. See *The Guardian* story below.]

“To fix this alleged problem, the reports call for stricter laws that would require people to show proof of citizenship when they vote.” <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/07/trump-election-commissioner-used-dubious-data-to-allege-an-alien-invasion/>

This story is brought up-to-date and made more urgent by an article in *The Guardian* this Sunday about **current attempts to purge voter rolls**. The paper headlines: **“Thousands at risk from rightwing push to purge eligible voters from US rolls**. Conservative groups such as PILF publish voters’ details online in what experts say amounts to ‘insidious modern-day intimidation’” They report, “Alien Invasion is one of the more startling examples of a growing rightwing push to pressurize election officials across the country to purge large numbers of

people from the registered voter rolls. With the [midterm elections](#) rapidly approaching, and with so much riding at both national and state level on voter turnout, the stakes could not be higher.

“Voting rights experts warn that hundreds of thousands of eligible voters could face hurdles as they try to get to polling stations in November.

[emphasis added] African American, Hispanic or other minority communities, as well as young voters, are especially vulnerable to purges as they more frequently experience the kind of bureaucratic hiccups that can lead them to them being mistakenly ruled ineligible.... A recent [study](#) by the Brennan Center for Justice found that since 2013, when the US supreme court drastically reduced federal controls against discriminatory behavior by largely southern states, there has been a dramatic uptick in voter purges. The numbers affected are breathtaking: **between 2014 and 2016 alone, 16 million people nationwide were removed from register rolls.** [emphasis added] *The Guardian* reports that Adams’s PILF is “being sued for defamation and voter intimidation over Alien Invasion.” This is a story of interest to all who are concerned about the integrity of the coming midterm elections. It has received little notice in the US press. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/23/voters-purges-elections-rolls-americans-pilf>

6. Another story that got buried this week was the whiplash we all felt when, on Monday, **it appeared that Rod Rosenstein would be fired, or resign, as deputy Attorney General.** We expect our readers have heard the outcome: that Trump will meet with him, but postponed the meeting as the Kavanaugh hearings went on. They will now meet next week, and Trump has said he is not looking to fire him, that he would “prefer” not to. But what actually happened over the weekend, after Friday’s dramatic story in *The New York Times* that Rosenstein had suggested both wearing a wire to record the president, and had discussed how the cabinet could invoke the 25th Amendment?

A team of *New York Times* reporters has gone behind the scenes to find out. They begin their Monday story: “When Rod J. Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general, headed to the White House on Monday morning, he was ready to resign and convinced — wrongly, it turned out — that President Trump was about to fire him. Top Justice Department aides scrambled to draft a statement about who would succeed him. By the afternoon, Mr. Rosenstein was back at his Pennsylvania Avenue office seven blocks away, still employed as the second-in-command at the Justice Department and, for the time being at least, still in charge of the Russia investigation.

“What happened in between was a confusing drama in which buzzy news reports of Mr. Rosenstein’s imminent departure set in motion a dash to the White House,

an offer to resign, Capitol Hill speculation about Mr. Rosenstein's successor and, finally, a reprieve from an out-of-town president." Read the whole dramatic account of what happened and what may yet happen here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/24/us/politics/rod-rosenstein-justice-department-trump.html>. (The original *Times* blockbuster story about Rosenstein's putative statements about Trump, titled "**Rod Rosenstein Suggested Secretly Recording Trump and Discussed 25th Amendment**," is here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/21/us/politics/rod-rosenstein-wear-wire-25th-amendment.html>.)

7. On Wednesday, **the trade war with Canada** [did we just write that? It still seems rather... Twilight Zone] **heated up**. As *The New York Times* reported, "President Trump said he rejected a meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada during the United Nations General Assembly this week and threatened on Wednesday to punish Canada by taxing the cars it exports into America, signaling a new low in relations between the two nations...."

"Frankly, we're thinking about just taxing cars coming in from Canada,' Mr. Trump said at a news conference on Wednesday. 'That's the mother lode. That's the big one. We're very unhappy with the negotiations and the negotiating style of Canada.'" Trump has threatened to write a revised trade deal with Mexico alone, and so in effect would pull out of Nafta. But, *The Times* reports, "There is also an ongoing legal debate as to whether the president has the authority to terminate Nafta on his own. If Nafta is terminated, Canada and Mexico could continue to trade on its terms or work together on their own new free trade agreement.

"The agreement the United States reached with Mexico in August updates Nafta provisions on the digital economy, automobiles, agriculture and labor unions. Among the most significant alterations are changes to rules governing car manufacturing, in an effort to bring more car production back to the United States from Mexico." <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/us/politics/trump-canada-nafta-tariffs.html>

For those interested in more detail of what the US and Canada want, there is an excellent summary of the sometimes-confusing background and current status of Nafta in Toronto's *Globe and Mail*. The paper wrote a March summary and updated it yesterday. "In its initial months, Mr. Trump's inner circle **strongly disagreed** about what demands to make in NAFTA renegotiations. There was a moderate camp, including Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Mr. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, that wanted to enhance NAFTA and make cross-border business easier for corporations, and a protectionist camp, including former chief strategist Steven Bannon. The protectionist camp has been more

dominant in recent months, especially since the March [departure](#) of economic adviser Gary Cohn. Out of that conversation came [an initial list](#) of 100 broad, sometimes vaguely worded demands that the U.S. Trade Representative's Office released in July, 2017." Among these demands are two that are unlikely Canada will agree to: Canada's ending its dairy and poultry supply-management scheme; and a five-year time limit on any agreement. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-nafta-explainer-trump-canada-mexico-trudeau/>

8. In a stinging op-ed in Wednesday's *New York Times*, Susan Rice, the national security adviser during President Obama's second term, writes on Wednesday after Trump's vitriolic address to the UN: "**Trump's America: Reckless, Alone and Ridiculed:** The president's speeches before the United Nations foreshadowed his intention to ignore our greatest threats and to stoke fresh conflict needlessly." She says, "On four critical policy fronts, President Trump foreshadowed his intention to ignore our greatest threats and to stoke fresh conflict where it is neither necessary nor wise. More telling than his rabidly ideological speech to the General Assembly was the president's more substantive remarks before the Security Council on Wednesday. And by now we have ample reason to conclude that Mr. Trump generally means what he says and (eventually) does much of what he threatens...."

"First, **President Trump doubled down on his determination to exonerate Russia and minimize the serious threat that it poses to us and our allies....** [emphasis added] For reasons we can only hope will soon become clear, President Trump remains determined to coddle our most dangerous adversary, to the increasing detriment of our national security...."

"Second, **President Trump persisted in fueling the false impression that he has effectively addressed the grave threat from North Korea.** [emphasis added] Granted, the reduction in tensions between North and South Korea and Mr. Trump's dialogue with Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, are preferable to 'fire and fury.' While the North's moratorium on missile and nuclear tests is a necessary first step, we are no closer to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea than this time last year...."

"Third, **President Trump just escalated the crisis with China from the economic to the political and security realm.** [emphasis added] Without offering a shred of evidence, Mr. Trump accused China in the Security Council chamber of [attempting to interfere](#) in the 2018 midterm election 'against my administration.' He elaborated, 'They do not want me or us to win because I am the first president ever to challenge China on trade.' It's a shocking charge that aims to equate China with Russia, whose proven election meddling was not mentioned by the president, and to stoke anti-Chinese hostility within the

Republican base, thereby establishing an excuse if the party fails to hold the House and even the Senate....

“Finally, **the Trump administration loudly reiterated its resolve to crush Iran economically and, potentially, militarily....** [emphasis added] The national security adviser, John Bolton, raised the ante, directly targeting our closest allies: ‘We do not intend to allow our sanctions to be evaded by Europe or anybody else.’ **Mr. Bolton warned Iran that, ‘if you cross us, our allies, or our partners; if you harm our citizens; if you continue to lie, cheat and deceive, yes, there will indeed be hell to pay.’** [emphasis added] He added, ‘We are watching, and we will come after you.’” Indeed, says Rice, this saber-rattling may lead to instability, or war in the Persian Gulf. Read this important statement of our dangerous foreign policy here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/opinion/trump-susan-rice-united-nations-reckless-alone-ridiculed.html> *Highly recommended reading

9. OK, it seems like funny animal stories are great click-bait for our readers. So here you go. “**Reported Burglar Turns Out To Be ‘Rogue Squirrel.’**” As *The Huffington Post* has it, this compelling story out of Britain ended this way: “The female caller was very distressed and called 999 as she heard noises downstairs and believed she was being burgled,’ [a police spokesman told Get West London](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/reported-burglar-actually-squirrel_us_5b4a3622e4b0bc69a787b74b) (“999” is the United Kingdom’s version of 911). ‘Officers attended on blue lights and established the only suspect was a squirrel who had knocked some items over and caused a bit of a mess.’ The spokesman added that the furry perp was ‘released with no charges.’” *Huff Post* reports that the only other squirrel involved in a burglary was a pet squirrel in Idaho, Joey, who fought off a burglar by biting him. (OK, a goofy story, kids, but we know you all love squirrel stories....) https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/reported-burglar-actually-squirrel_us_5b4a3622e4b0bc69a787b74b

10. In local news, *The New York Times* profiled the Illinois Sixth Congressional District, where Sean Casten is in a close race with Republican incumbent Peter Roskam. Their article, last Friday, discusses “**The Five Battlefields for Control of the House.**” They say of the district, “Mr. Roskam, a former member of the House Republican leadership team, represents one of 21 seats where college-educated white suburbanites could upend the Republican majority in the House. Most of these seats, in relatively homogenous communities around cities like Minneapolis and Philadelphia, are seen as electoral toss-ups.

“In 2016, Mr. Roskam easily secured re-election by nearly 20 percentage points, but Mrs. Clinton carried the area in the presidential race by about seven points.... Mr. Casten has closed in on Mr. Roskam with help from voters like Karrie

Sullivan, a former Roskam supporter who said she now favors divided government — both in Washington, where Republicans are in charge, and in Illinois, where Democrats may take full control of government in November. ‘It seems like the best situation is when neither party has complete control,’ Ms. Sullivan said.

“Mr. Roskam, like other Republican candidates in similar wealthy suburbs, has tried to make the Republican tax overhaul an asset to his campaign. But many suburban voters have bristled at changes to federal deductions for state and local taxes.” <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/19/us/politics/midterm-elections-congressional-districts.html> *The Times* / Sienna College [poll recently had](#) Roskam at 44%, Casten at 45%, within the margin of error.

Best wishes, and Peace,
Mark
The Indivisible DuPage Research Team

***“Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few”***

—From "The Mask of Anarchy. Written on the Occasion of the [army] Massacre at Manchester [1819]", By British Romantic Poet Percy Shelley