



EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | MAY 18, 2018

CONGRATULATIONS AMERICA

That's what President Donald Trump sarcastically tweeted on Thursday morning, on the one year anniversary of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Mueller has since provided a federal judge with an unredacted version of the Justice Department memo laying out the scope of his investigation and the potential crimes he's authorized to pursue.

Unfortunately the report remains classified and not public, leaving its details hidden. [Read More.](#)

President Trump's allies are waging an increasingly aggressive campaign to undercut the Russia investigation by exposing the role of a top-secret FBI source. The effort reached new heights Thursday as Trump alleged that an informant had improperly spied on his 2016 campaign and predicted that the ensuing scandal would be "bigger than Watergate!" [Read More.](#)

IN THE PACIFIC

North Korea has suspended talks with South Korea because of a joint military drill conducted by South Korea and the U.S. It has since threatened to cancel the planned summit between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un scheduled for June 12 in Singapore, saying the U.S. should carefully consider the fate of the upcoming meeting, in view of what it calls "provocative military disturbances with South Korea." [Read More.](#)

A senior North Korean official said Pyongyang isn't interested in a summit with the U.S. focused solely on denuclearization and accused Washington of trying to "impose on our

Despite all the drama, Korea Aerospace Industries, or KAI, has signed an agreement with U.S. avionics maker Rockwell Collins to collaborate on upgrading Chinook heavy-lift helicopters operated by South Korea's Army and Air Force. [Read More.](#)

On a related note, The U.S. State Department has cleared [Bahrain](#) to buy as many as 3,200 bomb bodies to arm its fleet of F-16 fighters, and has cleared the potential sale of three C-130J-30 Super Hercules airlifter and three KC-130J tankers to [Germany](#), with a potential combined price of \$1.4 billion.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The UN human rights chief says Israel used "wholly disproportionate" force against Palestinian border protests which have left over 100 people dead. On Monday alone, some 60 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces. [Read More.](#)

In Iraq, huge gains were made in Parliament by a party led by the anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, whose implacable opposition to the presence of United States troops in Iraq was a top reason Washington withdrew its combat forces in 2011. The results of the weekend's national elections in Iraq will force the U.S. President and Department of Defense to reconsider whether the U.S. can move ahead with plans to leave a residual force of about 4,500 American troops in Iraq after the war against the Islamic State. [Read More.](#)

And Syrian President Bashar al-Assad flew to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's summer residence on the Black Sea for talks about the Syrian conflict, the Kremlin said Thursday, a visit that underscored Moscow's status as Assad's chief backer. [Read More.](#)

ON CAPITOL HILL

The Senate voted Thursday to confirm Gina Haspel as the next CIA director after several Democrats were persuaded to support her despite lingering concerns about the role she played in the brutal interrogation of suspected terrorists captured after 9/11.

Haspel will be the first woman to serve as CIA director. [Read More.](#)

Another nomination is on the horizon, after President Trump announced Friday that he will nominate acting Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie to permanently fill the position. [Read More.](#)

And, immigration is back at the forefront of lawmakers' minds. Conservatives in the House Freedom Caucus opposed a massive farm bill after leadership failed to deliver on their

demand to hold a vote on a conservative-backed immigration bill. [Read More.](#)

A DEVELOPING STORY

Yet another tragic school shooting has left at least eight people dead in Texas. The shooting in Santa Fe, Texas, reportedly began before 8 a.m. local time, putting the school on lockdown and sending police rushing to the scene. Several witnesses have said the attacker was armed with a shotgun. [Read More.](#)

Possible explosive devices have also been found at Santa Fe High School and off campus, the Santa Fe Independent School District [tweeted](#).

LOOK AHEAD

The Senate Armed Services Committee will mark up the FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act next week. See the schedule, [here](#).

On Thursday, May 24th, AFA will host General John Raymond, Commander of Air Force Space Command, for a breakfast discussion. Register [here](#).

And this Saturday, May 19th, Meghan Markle will [marry](#) Prince Harry at Windsor Castle.

Have a great weekend!