



Date and Time: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 10:32:00 AM EDT

Job Number: 68311270

Document (1)

1. [MTP DAILY WITH CHUCK TODD for June 1, 2018](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: mtp daily chuck todd

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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MTP DAILY WITH CHUCK TODD for June 1, 2018

MSNBC MTP DAILY 5:00 PM EST

June 1, 2018 Friday

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Section: NEWS; International

Length: 7581 words

Byline: Katy Tur, Josh Lipton, Charlie Sykes, Jonathan Alter

Guests: Eric Deggans, Caitlin Huey-Burns, Susan Del Percio

Highlight: According to President Trump, North Korea summit is back on. Barr, Bee, and the culture war. Eric Deggans and Charlie Sykes join to discuss two comedian's controversies: Roseanne's racist tweet and Sam Bee's vulgar language toward Ivanka Trump. California gubernatorial candidate Gavin Newsom said he wanted to run against a Republican in the general election. It looks like he will get his wish. President Trump tests the limits of his presidential power as his Republican Congress remains mum about his controversial actions and allegations. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pushes back against Trump's trade tariffs, calling the national security rationale insulting and unacceptable.

Body

JOHN HEILEMANN, MSNBC HOST: Katy Tur, **MTP DAILY**, it's starting now. She's in for **Chuck**.

Hi, Katy. What are you doing this weekend?

KATY TUR, MSNBC HOST: What are you talking about? It's exactly 5:00.

HEILEMANN: Well, I padded.

TUR: That was not early at all.

HEILEMANN: I padded.

TUR: You said you were going to give it over early.

HEILEMANN: I padded.

TUR: And then you kept talking you gave it over on time.

HEILEMANN: Yes, yes. Oh, yes.

TUR: This weekend, I'm going on "MEET THE PRESS."

HEILEMANN: Yes. Yes.

TUR: So please tune in.

HEILEMANN: Wow.

TUR: I know.

HEILEMANN: "MEET THE PRESS" with Katy Tur, wow.

TUR: They're actually letting me on. It's great.

HEILEMANN: Yes, it is.

TUR: I'm excited.

HEILEMANN: Good luck.

TUR: Are you doing anything fun?

HEILEMANN: Yes. Oh, I'm going to have a great time, but just give -- yes, just give **Chuck** hell, OK?

(LAUGHTER)

TUR: John Heilemann, thank you very much. If it's Friday, I hate these blurred lines.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TUR (voice-over): Tonight, the "I alone" presidency. From controversial pardons to a Wall Street leak, how President Trump is flaunting unchecked power.

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I'm working. I'm working hard for you people.

TUR (voice-over): Plus, trading blows. The President's tariffs are alienating U.S. allies.

JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA: The idea that we are somehow a national security threat to the United States is quite frankly insulting and unacceptable.

TUR (voice-over): How the international backlash could hit your bottom line.

And fighting words. Inside the culture clash over race, vulgarities, and American values.

This is **MTP DAILY**, and it starts right now.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: Good evening. I'm Katy Tur in New York in for **Chuck Todd** and welcome to **MTP DAILY**.

Are there any lines the President cannot cross? Because he is crossing a lot of them right now, and Republicans in control of Congress aren't doing much about it.

The President is lying about evidence associated with the Russia investigation and about spies infiltrating his campaign, all as part of an effort to undermine that investigation.

He's pardoning people, perhaps sending a message to witnesses who might testify against him that they, too, could be pardoned. So stay strong.

In an effort to prop up the dying coal industry, his administration is reportedly weighing an unprecedented intervention in the U.S. energy grid which would basically order some folks to get their electricity from coal plants.

He tipped off Wall Street this morning about confidential employment numbers more than an hour before they were officially released. Possibly to give himself some cover from last night's decision to slap steep tariffs on our closest allies in Europe, Canada, and Mexico, renewing fears that he is leading us into a trade war.

When given a chance to denounce a racist comment, he, instead, attacked the press. He suggested one of his critics should be fired for using offensive language, all while painting himself as the real victim.

So where is the Republican Party? The party of the rule law? The party of Lincoln? The party of free trade?

As former House Speaker John Boehner recently said, they're taking a nap somewhere. What are the consequences? Well, here's where we're headed, according to at least the former Attorney General.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You hear a lot about the possibility of a constitutional crisis coming. What's the trigger for that? Are we already there?

ERIC HOLDER, FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES: We are on what I have come to call, I think, the path of inevitability. We're going to be there at some point. It is pretty close to inevitable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: Joining me now from Nashville is David French, senior writer for the "National Review." And with me on set, tonight's panel -- Caitlin Huey- Burns, national political reporter for RealClearPolitics; Jonathan Alter, columnist for "The Daily Beast" and an MSNBC political analyst; and Susan Del Percio, Republican strategist and also an MSNBC political analyst.

Guys, welcome.

First off, David, I want to start with you. What's your reaction to Eric Holder? Do you think we're heading towards a constitutional crisis?

DAVID FRENCH, SENIOR WRITER, NATIONAL REVIEW: I think it's premature to make that prediction. I mean, one may happen but let's look at what's happened in the more than a year since Trump has been president. He has tweeted a lot of things, he has said a lot of things, but overall the system has held.

You have not seen this president defy court orders. You have not seen this president defy the Supreme Court. What you have seen is the American system, as designed by the founders, has a lot of checks and balances.

Now, you can strain it at the joints, but it takes an awful lot to create a real and genuine constitutional crisis. We're not there yet. I don't know that we'll ever get there.

TUR: Well, here's what Holder said about where we are going in terms of the Justice Department. Take a listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HOLDER: I suspect that we are on a path where there is going to be an inevitable clash. We're going to get to a point where the Justice Department simply will not go any further -- I think Rod will not go any further -- and something is going to happen. I don't know who gets fired or what happens, but we are going to be -- you know, buckle up your seatbelt.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: David?

FRENCH: Well, you know, that's all certainly possible, but we can't forget that the United States has seen worse than what we are experiencing right now -- by several orders of magnitude during the Nixon administration -- and the system held. This system worked.

And so, you know, I want to be really, really careful about using words like "constitutional crisis." I do think that the President could act impulsively and create a political crisis, but a constitutional crisis, in my view, is an order of magnitude greater than that.

And we need to be really careful about our rhetoric because what happens when you -- as we've seen time and again, when you cry wolf and you cry wolf and you cry wolf, when the wolf is actually at the door, nobody believes you anymore.

TUR: I understand that, but take a look at what John Brennan said -- and this is for everybody -- in an op-ed in "The Washington Post." Former CIA Director John Brennan.

For more than three decades, I observed and analyzed the traits and tactics of corrupt, incompetent, and narcissistic foreign officials who did whatever they thought was necessary to retain power.

Exploiting the fears and concerns of their citizenry, these demagogues routinely relied on lies, deceit, and suppression of political opposition to cast themselves as populist heroes and to mask self-serving priorities. It never dawned on me that we could face such a development in the United States.

Here's the thing -- I think if we had a different type of president in office, one of the things that he may have done over the past year and a half would set off real alarm bells. But he is doing these things, he's pushing these boundaries, every day. Sometimes multiple times a day.

And when you consider that, do you think that, I don't know, Jon, maybe Eric Holder is not being -- is not sounding the alarm enough? Maybe he is downplaying it while John Brennan is the one who is maybe looking at it a little bit more clearly.

JONATHAN ALTER, COLUMNIST, THE DAILY BEAST: I think Brennan has the right analysis here. You know, the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan had a phrase.

He called it defining deviancy down when deviant behavior becomes normal, and then suddenly, it loses its capacity to shock. And that's when a society gets in trouble.

And, you know, the -- it's true that the system hasn't blown up, that there is a fair amount of resistance. I don't think it's true that this is, you know, much less serious than Watergate.

If you look at Watergate -- and Nixon didn't defy court orders or do some of the other things that prompted --

TUR: Well, he tried not to hand over tapes.

ALTER: He tried not to. He tried not to, but when -- you know, when the court ordered him to, he did. So he resisted in certain ways.

But the level of lying in this administration has already greatly exceeded that which was done in the Nixon administration, and I think it's sort of silly to compare Nixon and Trump. But this is extraordinarily corrosive and damaging to our system.

TUR: Ben Rhodes has a new book out about the Obama presidency, the last days of it, as Obama was grappling with Donald Trump winning the presidency. And he, according to Rhodes, asks this question or says, you know, we're going to find out right now how durable our systems are, how durable our institutions are, how durable our relationships are with allies.

CAITLIN HUEY-BURNS, NATIONAL POLITICAL REPORTER, REALCLEARPOLITICS: Sure. To David's point, that is holding up but the President is certainly testing that. But I think what's important here is that the President and his allies and those supporting him are not going to listen to someone like Eric Holder. They're not going to even listen to people in the intelligence community because everything else you --

TUR: They're certainly not listening to John Brennan.

HUEY-BURNS: And not listening to John Brennan. Everything now is viewed, I think, for worse, in this partisan lens that anybody who is disagreeing with you is now considered not right.

And also, we have to consider that the President has done all of these things with impunity. He hasn't been punished politically. He hasn't suffered political consequences from this.

During the election, he did all this and was elected. Republicans in Congress are in primary season right now. You have candidates running for office on the Republican ticket who don't want to cross Trump because that's just the reality of the Republican base right now.

That may change later on, we'll see. But at this point, I don't see the incentive for them, just from an analytical perspective, to stop the President from saying these things.

TUR: No incentive for them. But the Republican Party has always been a party that's been very serious about their principles.

HUEY-BURNS: Yes.

TUR: Very serious about what they believe in and what they do not believe in. Morals were certainly a big part of it, but also the rule of law was a big part of Republican orthodoxy.

HUEY-BURNS: Yes.

SUSAN DEL PERCIO, REPUBLICAN STRATEGIST: Right.

TUR: They would tout it a lot. What did they go on this?

DEL PERCIO: Well, I think to Speaker Boehner's point, it's not that the Republican Party is taking a nap, it's in a deep hibernation. They are basically almost sticking their head in the sand and saying, we just need to survive. And they don't care where it's going.

And, frankly, that's taking a page out of Donald Trump's playbook because they figure, as long as they are not suffering major consequences, then it's OK to continue.

Is it right? No. Do you hear people like myself and David and others screaming as loud as we can? But it doesn't seem to matter because that's the way things are going.

And to the earlier point about, you know, when is there a constitutional crisis? How do you gauge it? We're -- I don't think we're anywhere near there. I think we are at a different crisis, though, and that is a conscientious crisis. I mean, what our leaders are allowing to be deemed as normal is a disgrace.

TUR: Well, David, what do you think about that? Where -- I mean, if the Republicans are napping, what's going to just shake them awake? What's going to be the thing that shakes them awake?

FRENCH: Yes. Well, I like that phrase conscientious crisis or crisis of conscience. I think there is a lot of people who are setting aside a lot of values they've advanced for a very long time for the sake of attaching themselves, at least for now, to the Trump administration.

The question is, you know, what does it take to kind of change the dynamic? I'll tell you what it takes. Really and truly, it takes election results.

One of the things that really has caused an awful lot of people who sort of held their nose and voted for Trump to now be enthusiastically behind him is they never expected that he would win. And when he won, it delighted them. It shook up their expectations.

And these things happen in cycles. Will the Republican Party love Trump as much if there is midterm disaster? I doubt it. If there is midterm success, then this would be much more of a Trump party.

There is an awful lot of people in Washington, people I've talked to, who are kind of hanging back right now. What they're doing is they don't love Trump, they don't know what the future hold, they don't know what to think -- and that's not a profile in courage, but it's also not wrapping both of their arms around Trump.

TUR: But doesn't this --

FRENCH: So there is a lot up on the air.

TUR: I mean, Donald Trump ran on being an anti-politician. He ran on politicians lying, not being truthful, not really being who they are.

And doesn't his ascension and all of the things that he's done in this White House, lied repeatedly, broken norms, doesn't that really pull off the mask for Republican politicians more than anyone else to say that they really only care about getting re-elected and keeping their seats as opposed to what they actually signed on for, which was protecting the constitution and doing, you know, what is right, being -- putting their -- putting country over politics?

FRENCH: Well, you only know you have values when holding those values has a cost. For a long time, it was easy to say that you believed in those things and get elected as a Republican and to say that you believed them.

Then when Donald Trump comes along and you say, well, character matters in a politician, lying matters even if the economy is good, and then that has a cost and people go silent? Then I doubt that they ever truly had that value in the first place.

TUR: Here is where the --

FRENCH: Right now, a lot of values are being tested.

TUR: Here is where the Republicans have not gone silent. Suddenly, a lot of them woke up for their -- we'll use Boehner's word, their nap when it comes the tariffs and trade.

Kevin Brady, Texas, Republican -- these tariffs are hitting the wrong target.

Ben Sasse, Nebraska -- this is dumb.

Lamar Alexander, Tennessee senator -- these tariffs will raise prices and destroy manufacturing jobs.

Speaker Paul Ryan -- I disagree with this decision.

Senator Mike Lee -- I'll be co-sponsoring a bill -- I'm sorry, this is Pat Toomey saying he is going to be co-sponsoring Senator Mike Lee's bill to reign in the executive branch's power to impose unilateral taxes -- tax increases like these. Why is this the issue that woke Republicans up?

HUEY-BURNS: Well, this has always been the disagreement, right, that traditional Republicans have had with the President, dating back to the actual campaign. Trade was something that the President --

TUR: This is the agreement?

HUEY-BURNS: No, no, no.

DEL PERCIO: It's not --

TUR: They disagreed on everything.

HUEY-BURNS: No, no, no. They disagreed --

DEL PERCIO: It's really much more simple. Look at the people who are making those statements. It's about their jobs.

ALTER: Yes.

DEL PERCIO: This is where they get to say I'm going to stand up because my constituents --

HUEY-BURNS: So that --

DEL PERCIO: -- that will vote for me somewhere down the road still.

ALTER: Yes, so it's still selfish.

DEL PERCIO: This is what they care. So it is still --

ALTER: And it's still not principle.

DEL PERCIO: I mean, they're opposition is not out of the goodness of principle.

ALTER: Yes, they're not --

HUEY-BURNS: But the --

DEL PERCIO: They're doing this for themselves.

HUEY-BURNS: But the question is, what kind of impact is that actually going to have? It's not going to have any. My point is that they've voiced these concerns, and the President goes ahead with it anyway. And again, what is the political consequence?

DEL PERCIO: Their vote.

ALTER: Well, I actually --

DEL PERCIO: Their vote. If they --

ALTER: But --

HUEY-BURNS: Sure.

DEL PERCIO: If they hold it against the President when he is trying to get something passed, that's what they -- that's their only chip on this.

ALTER: Well, they're trying to protect the economy. They believe that protectionism hurts the economy.

HUEY-BURNS: Yes.

ALTER: I think they're right about that, by the way, and -- but that is an indirect way of saying I want to get re-elected. Because if the economy goes south over the summer, you know, their constituents are not going to be happy, and it would be worse for the Republican Party.

What's interesting is that they chose to take an issue like trade, which is really not a matter of deep constitutional consequence, and speak out on that rather than on these assaults on our system, assaults on integrity, assaults on the truth.

That's why they are deserving to be called Banana Republicans. They're acting like they're living in a banana republic, not in a republic like we have in the United States.

TUR: And let's put a pin in it right there. David French, thank you very much.

Caitlin, Jonathan, Susan, stay with us.

Ahead, a "MEET THE PRESS" exclusive. You wonder why I'm here today? **Chuck** is in Canada and just finished interviewing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He has some tough words for President Trump about those new tariffs.

TUR: Welcome back. President Trump is rolling the dice with a trade war that is infuriating some of America's closest allies.

The administration's new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico, and the European Union are provoking a swift backlash. All three are planning counter-tariffs on their own -- of their own, including other American goods like pork, apples, grapes, and certain kinds of cheese.

President Trump's response? Bring it on. Along with morning tweets about the Russia probe, jobs numbers, and Samantha Bee, which we will get to later, President Trump wrote that Canada has treated our agricultural business and farmers very poorly for a very long time. Highly restrictive on trade, they must open their markets and take down their trade barriers.

The reason, again, I'm hosting this show today instead of **Chuck** is because he went to Ottawa to interview Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for Sunday's "MEET THE PRESS." And Trudeau had some choice words about President Trump's decision to move forward with tariffs.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUDEAU: The idea that, you know, our soldiers, who had fought and died together on the beaches of World War II and in the mountains of Afghanistan and have stood shoulder to shoulder in some of the most difficult places in the world, that are always there for each other, somehow -- this is insulting to that.

The idea that the Canadian steel that's in military vehicles in the United States, the Canadian aluminum that makes your fighter jets, is somehow now a threat? The fact that -- I mean, next week, we're hosting the G7 Summit of world leaders. And the airfield, the military base that Air Force One is going to land on was put there in World War II to protect an aluminum smelter that was providing to the military effort.

The idea that we are somehow a national security threat to the United States is, quite frankly, insulting and unacceptable.

CHUCK TODD, MSNBC HOST: What do you feel as if the President wants from you in putting these tariffs out there?

TRUDEAU: I don't know.

TODD: You don't know what he wants here? You don't know --

TRUDEAU: I know --

TODD: Is this about --

TRUDEAU: I know --

TODD: Is this about a NAFTA decision?

TRUDEAU: Well, he --

TODD: You don't have an idea what he wants?

TRUDEAU: The reason I don't know is because he has talked about the fact of this -- he is worried about trade surpluses, trade deficits around the world. Well, they have a \$2 billion surplus on steel with us, so it's not like the trade is imbalanced against the U.S. favor on this one.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: Our panel is back -- Caitlin Huey-Burns, Jonathan Alter, Susan Del Percio.

Is Trudeau laying it on thick there?

DEL PERCIO: Yes, but he should be. That's exactly what people of his country want to see him doing, is standing up to Donald Trump. Because Donald Trump has basically said we don't need any friends in this world. We can go it alone as a nation.

And I think it's actually great that leaders are standing up. Now, I don't know at what point of what mass it takes to kind of shake Donald Trump a little bit to get him to start recognizing we have to have our allies in place, but I think it's --

TUR: Does he just think that the allies are going to be there no matter what if we really need them? This sort of thing is not really going to move them because they need us ultimately more than we need them.

DEL PERCIO: I think that's part of the case, yes.

HUEY-BURNS: Sure, I mean listen to what he said when talking about North Korea today, just saying, you know, everybody wants a solution here so everybody is going to kind of be there for us. So I think that's certainly a part of the mindset, which is not an accurate one. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that's how he has been explaining it.

And the other thing about trade and tariffs specifically is that he talks about it as something that he campaigned on. Certainly, he did, but a lot of this target the very voters that helped propel him to office. The very voters in his constituency that --

TUR: Harley Davidson, that's in Wisconsin.

HUEY-BURNS: -- are going to be affected by this, right? And so this is the -- this is where it, you know, can go wrong for him.

ALTER: And the Canadians are actually targeting Trump areas --

TUR: Yes.

ALTER: -- with a number of these retaliatory measures. Look, sometimes, history is about what didn't happen and that has huge historical consequences.

For 200 years, we have had a relationship with Canada like this. We've never had any border, you know, disputes. We have been together in wars, as Prime Minister Trudeau said. And we've been together very much in peace and building, between our two nations, the strongest continental economy the world has ever seen by orders of magnitude.

And to jeopardize this, even in a small way, to have even a, you know, lover's quarrel in a basically stable marriage is pointless. It's harmful to people on both sides of the border, and it's reflective of the idea that this president doesn't have a clue as to what he is actually doing.

TUR: Here's the thing. Trudeau is at least still calling that meeting of nations the G7. The French Foreign Minister isn't even calling it the G7 any longer. He is calling it the G6 Plus One.

Unfortunately, we're going to have a G6 Plus One with the United States alone against everyone and running the risk of economic destabilization.

He is saying that we're going to be, I don't know, the redheaded stepchild of the meeting of nations.

ALTER: What's crazy is that normally, famously, Canada is a boring story. You know, the famous headline, "Worthwhile Canadian Initiative," is supposedly the most boring headline ever written.

But boring is good when you're talking about global relations, G7. And to turn the G7 and our bilateral relations with Canada into a reality show is really dumb. Unless your only point is to create reality shows.

TUR: So what happens next?

DEL PERCIO: I gave up guessing with Donald Trump what is next.

TUR: Does he pull back? I mean, he oftentimes will saber rattle this stuff, but will he pull back?

DEL PERCIO: No, I actually think today when he was talking about North Korea and the summit -- and he said something really interesting, and it goes to this point.

He said, but, you know, it's much better for Japan and South Korea because they are so far away. They -- you know, that place over there is so far away from the United States. No matter what happens, we're OK because we're us.

And I think that's the way Donald Trump likes to use it as an -- a way to reach out to his voters, who believe America first, America alone will be fine.

TUR: But is this all just about perception for him? I mean, really? I mean, he wants these one-on-one trade deals because he says they're going to be better, and he wants to say that he is the big negotiator. And I don't think it's a lot about facts because what he does is he says something that's not true, and then he continues to say it even when you say that is not true.

He bragged about it in March. "The Washington Post" had a story about him telling his donors that he didn't even know what he was talking with, but he told Canada that he had a trade deficit.

DEL PERCIO: But here is part of the thing. With the tariffs and even the --

TUR: That we had a trade deficit.

DEL PERCIO: -- in the discussion of pardons, is these are things that he can do alone. He doesn't need anybody else to make these things happen. And that's why he likes it.

He has given up on the fact that he is going to get anything done working domestically. And he is finally saying, like, oh, well, this is what I thought I could do as president. I can do anything by myself.

And it's a very egocentric way of doing business. It's the only thing -- it's like -- he's like acting out like a child by saying, oh, I could just, with a pen, do this.

ALTER: Or you know --

DEL PERCIO: Or pardon that.

ALTER: Or like maybe a senile senior citizen when he says today, oh, I got a very interesting letter from Mr. Kim, and he hasn't even opened the letter yet, you know.

TUR: Yes.

ALTER: Somebody tweeted, if that was your grandmother, you would say --

TUR: Well, it's always going to be that --

ALTER: -- grandma, you need to actually open the letter first before you say it's interesting.

TUR: He likes to tease. He says one thing. He contradicts it in the next sentence. We're going to leave that here. Just for the record, I have a redheaded stepchild who I love very much. So I want to be clear about that.

Caitlin, Jonathan, Susan, stay with us.

A reminder, you can see much more of **Chuck**'s interview with Prime Minister Trudeau this Sunday on "MEET THE PRESS" on your local NBC station.

Ahead, two comedians plow headfirst into controversy. Things have suddenly gotten very serious for Roseanne Barr and Samantha Bee. The clash between comedy and politics, next.

TUR: Welcome back. First, it was on. Then it was off. Now President Trump says the summit with Kim Jong-un is back on the books for June 12th. A top deputy to the North Korean leader paid a visit to the Oval Office earlier today. He hand-delivered a letter to President Trump, a letter that the president described as very nice and very interesting, even though he hadn't read the letter at the time.

That followed a not as nice letter President Trump wrote to Kim last week canceling the summit. The talks derailed after a North Korean official lashed out at Vice President Pence, calling him a political dummy. But judging by the president today, relations have improved once again.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Went very well. It is really a get to know you kind of a situation. We are going to start a process. And I told him today, take your time. You can go fast. We can go slowly. But I think they would like to see something happen. And if we can work that out, that would be good.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: The president competing there with some tweets -- some actual tweets from chirping birds which is not the trouble he typically has when it comes to tweets. The president also said he is putting a hold on new sanctions against North Korea. We'll be right back.

JOSH LIPTON, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT, CNBC: I'm Josh Lipton with the "CNBC Market Wrap." The major indexes closing in the green today. Stocks pushed higher by the strong jobs report. The Dow rose 219 points. The S&P gained 29 points. The Nasdaq closed at 112 points higher.

Back to the jobs report. The U.S. economy shifting into hyper drive last month, adding 223,000 jobs and cutting the unemployment rate to 3.8 percent. Average hourly earnings rose 2.7 percent over the past year. That's it from CNBC, first in business worldwide. Now back to "**MTP Daily**."

TUR: Welcome back. This week we, saw two comedians stepping over line, conservative comedian Roseanne Barr's racist tweet about a former Obama adviser and liberal comedian Samantha Bee's vulgar mark about Ivanka Trump.

Their comments have reignited the debate on both sides of the aisle about what constitutes inappropriate and unacceptable language. And both the left and right are accusing each other of hypocrisy when it comes to calling out off color language.

I'm joined by Charlie Sykes, MSNBC contributor and longtime conservative commentator, and NPR TV critic and MSNBC contributor Eric Deggans. Gentlemen, thank you very much. Charlie, first to you, what do you make of the reciprocal anger from Trump, the White House and conservatives towards Samantha Bee?

CHARLIE SYKES, CONSERVATIVE COMMENTATOR, MSNBC CONTRIBUTOR: First of all, I mean, we live in this era of whataboutism. We are in a downward spiral of incivility.

I think it's revealing that after this textbook case of racism that we got from Roseanne Barr that the response from the White House of course was not to express outrage or concern, but simply to say, well, what about this liberal comedian, who by the way also crossed the line, also crossed the line and was also, by the way -- since we are talking about comedians, grossly unfunny?

This is part of the problem. But I think this is what you get, the degraded political culture and dialogue that we are getting, that you do have this duelling hypocrisy. And by way, how incredibly hypocritical is it for the Trump White House? We are talking about the Trump White House expressing indignation and outrage over sexist slurs.

I think you probably -- I think, Katy, you probably saw that particular C word displayed at Trump rallies that you covered throughout 2016, so there is a little bit of fake posturing going on around here.

TUR: You know, I did. And here is the thing about that word. While I never heard Donald Trump say it, he did call Ted Cruz the P word on stage and he called -- said Hillary Clinton was schlonged by Obama. He has got a long history of saying these things.

But when it comes particularly to -- specifically to that word, I never saw the president call out anybody in any of these crowds and say to that person, hey, this is too far, this is not OK, you can't do it. He almost condoned it. He certainly capitalized on that sort of anger and behavior in order to propel himself to the White House.

Eric, what do you think? Why hasn't the White House come out though and tried to take a -- if they want to take a moral stand against Samantha Bee, should they have taken one with Roseanne Barr first?

ERIC DEGGANS, NPR TELEVISION CRITIC, MSNBC CONTRIBUTOR: Well, I mean, obviously, this is a White House that goes after the people that they feel are attacking them and they viewed Roseanne as an ally and that's why they haven't spoken out against her.

But I think it is a mistake to focus too much on who used what word when. Samantha Bee has admitted that she made a mistake in using that word and I think she did. But I think what is important is you have to look at a broadcaster or a performer's history.

Do they have a history of using sexist language, of demeaning women, of saying things that are racist or homophobic or islamophobic?

And in Roseanne Barr's case, she had a history of saying things on social media that were in a similar vein. She had said -- she had compared former Obama aide Susan Rice also, another black woman, to an ape. She had said disturbing things about Islam. And she had also re-tweeted conspiracy theories.

So, I don't think you can compare the two cases simply because Samantha Bee admitted that she crossed the line, but when you look at her history, her reports and her comedy have been about looking out for women's issues, about highlighting when women are oppressed or when women are held back. And she crossed the line in using this word. And she has apologized for it. So I think these two things are very different.

TUR: Are we perhaps in peril going down a slippery slope if we continue to demand apologies from comedians? Their job is to push the envelope, not to say that this is pushing the envelope.

DEGGANS: I think the real problem -- I think the real problem that we have here is we are focusing on the wrong issues. It is not so much about the use of an individual word. In the case of Roseanne Barr and what she did, it's about echoing a trope of stereotyping comparing black people to apes that we have been dealing with for hundreds of years, and it's been rapt inside a lot of our media for many years.

And so trying to eradicate that systemic prejudice, trying to get people to understand that comparing black people to apes echoes a prejudice that has been used to hold people black for hundreds of years, that is a much different thing than a comedian using a word that crosses the line.

And I think some people are trying to conflate these things because they don't want to have that discussion about systemic prejudice. They don't want to have that discussion about when a performer says something that reflects a wider problem in society. I don't think anyone thinks that Samantha Bee was trying to reach out to sexists in the audience by using that word.

And so we are talking about two different things here. I don't -- I think the effort to conflate them is an effort to make Roseanne look like she was just cracking an off-color joke rather than doing something that was much more damaging.

TUR: Charlie, I'm old enough to remember when Donald Trump ran on being politically incorrect and ran against those who are clutching their pearls at everything.

SYKES: Well, exactly. Of course, he in fact has created an environment in which people feel that they can push these lines. I mean, you know, go back and look by the way at the Twitter feed of Dinesh D'Souza, who just got to be pardoned, the kinds of things that he said, referring to Barack Obama as a boy out of the Ghetto and things like that.

But, you know, going to this point of the danger of having a double standard, look, they are not equivalent. I am not arguing that they are equivalent. The Trump White House, I think, is very cynically using Samantha Bee in order to take attention away from the racism of somebody who was touted by the president of the United States.

But on the other hand, you know, isn't this kind of a moment to realize that, you know, if you want to have a higher moral standard here, if you want to have the higher ground, then don't find a way to excuse vulgar sexist language as opposed to vulgar racist language.

And I'm not saying that they are equivalent because I don't think they are. But I do think that there is a real danger for people falling into kind of this double standard. And by the way, it's hypocrisy Olympics all the way around here.

TUR: Let's also remind people that Samantha Bee was talking very specifically about a Trump policy that was just enacted at the border ripping families apart. Here's what her statement about that says today, the White House's war on the full frontal host risks calling more public attention -- you know what, that's not the right one, I'm sorry.

Right here. We spend the day wrestling with the repercussions of one bad word when we should have spent the day incensed that as a nation, we are wrenching children from their parents and treating people legally seeking asylum as criminals.

Charlie, doesn't she have a point?

SYKES: Well, yes. But in some ways induced (ph) her use of the word because it is legitimate to talk about what is happening to children on the border, this policy of the new cruelty. Had in fact she not used that word, maybe we would be talking about that. This is where you undermine, you blow yourself up, you make yourself less persuasive.

TUR: Yeah.

SYKES: And again, comedians first of all should be funny. If she wants to be an activist, she should try to actually advance the cause rather than provide this kind of a distraction for the cause.

The Trump administration of course has now seized upon this, that we are not talking about why did the president of the United States, why did the major network promote someone who, a vile racist like Roseanne Barr and by the way this was completely predictable, but instead of that, we are talking about the whataboutism and that's self-inflicted.

TUR: You know, I got to say the Samantha Bee word blew that immigration story out of my rundown the other day. So, don't worry, we are going to be talking about it. We are getting it back in, I promise. It's important. Charlie Sykes, Eric Deggans, thank you very much.

Ahead, lordy, there are tapes. The Michael Cohen phone recordings that are getting some serious attention.

TUR: Welcome back. Tonight in "Meet the Midterms," California gubernatorial candidate Gavin Newsom may just get his dream opponent in the general election.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GAVIN NEWSOM, CALIFORNIA GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE: A Republican would be ideal in the general election.

(APPLAUSE)

NEWSOM: I just said it. I will be very honest about it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE (voice over): Careful what to wish for.

NEWSOM: Either one of these will do.

(APPLAUSE)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: That line got a laugh in the debate Chuck was moderating. I don't know if you could hear his voice there. But Newsom was not joking.

In California, the top two vote getters regardless of party affiliation move on to the general election. Newsom wants to run against a Republican rather than the former Democratic mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, the other big Democrat in the race.

Even though some strategists are warning that a Republican at the top of the ticket could increase GOP turnout and make it harder for Democrats to win down ballot races and retake the House. And with the primary just days away, Newsom may get his wish. A new poll from U.C. Berkeley has Republican John Cox with a seven-point lead for second place over Villaraigosa.

Cox's rise in the polls could be the results of consolidation in the Republican vote. That poll was taken after President Trump gave his full endorsement to Cox. So, we are going to be watching on Tuesday to see what happens. And we are back with more "MTP Daily" right after this.

TUR: Welcome back. Time now for "The Lid." The panel is back. Caitlin Huey-Burns, Jonathan Alter, Susan Del Percio. Michael Cohen is back in the news for the tactics he used as Donald Trump's fixer.

Take a listen to how he spoke to a reporter who was doing a story on a Trump biography which included a line from a deposition from Ivana Trump, Donald Trump's first wife, saying that Donald Trump had raped her, which Donald Trump has denied. Listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MICHAEL COHEN, ATTORNEY (voice over): So I'm warning you, tread very (bleep) lightly because what I'm going to do to you is going to be (bleep) disgusting. Do you understand me?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TUR: Tim Max is not the only reporter that Cohen has threatened like this. There are other reports out there. What does it say about the way Donald Trump operated?

JONATHAN ALTER, COLUMNIST FOR THE DAILY BEAST, MSNBC ANALYST: Like the mafia. The only question is whether it's more like "The Sopranos" or "The Godfather." I tend to go on the Vito Corleone side of the argument because it's not just thuggish, it's stupid.

TUR: Minimizing it though.

HUEY-BURNS: The reporter had reached out to the campaign for comment. And they sent him Michael Cohen. And this, I think, shows that Michael Cohen was playing the fixer role, not the legal role.

And I think that's really important in the context in which we're going to be thinking and learning things about Cohen with the mess that he's involved in.

TUR: Like \$130,000 hush payment in which Stormy Daniels said she was pressured into --

ALTER: This happened before the election. Tim Max was my colleague at The Daily Beast and we had a transcript of that that we were re-tweeting --

TUR: Right after it happened.

ALTER: -- over and over in 2016. Nobody cared. It was reported endlessly that not only do the trumpsters sound like the mafia, they were in business with the mafia. Nobody cared.

TUR: Yeah, there is this myth that's going around social media now that we never reported any of these things about Donald Trump. It's like, did you turn on the television? We reported about this stuff every single day. You might have cared, but there was a good chunk of the public, enough of them to get them into the Oval Office that did not care.

DEL PERCIO: At the end of the day, it's from being with President Trump. Anthony Scaramucci had the same problem. He got fired for the way he conducted an interview. This is how they operate because this is what you learned from the president.

TUR: OK, so we are going to talk about Rosie O'Donnell and Samantha Bee, but I think what we should talk about is the immigration issue which we haven't been able to get to enough because of this other controversy.

Families are being torn apart at the border. The administration says this is a law. It is not a law. It is a policy. What does this say about how we are willing to treat those crossing the border that we are saying to them, no matter what you do, even if you are seeking asylum, we are going to take your kids away?

ALTER: First of all, doing that is illegal because asylum seekers have not broken the law. They are under federal law. They are entitled to a process to determine whether their application for asylum is legitimate or not.

They are being prevented from having that process, then separated cruelly from their children in defiance of everything that we stand for as Americans, everything about the statue of liberty and what we're supposed to be.

But it's very important to understand that even though there were some abuses in the Obama administration, which is what the whataboutism types are always saying, that was a different situation. That was not dealing with these asylum seekers and short circuiting the due process that they're entitled to under the law.

TUR: Is this what Republicans stand for?

DEL PERCIO: No. Some Republicans apparently, but not all Republicans. And I think what would be really interesting is if there weren't other things kind of covering up this story, if you will, now, whether it's North Korea or Roseanne, whoever, this was a story with a visual that just really could have worked to have hit Donald Trump in a different kind of way.

This is a story that really started off with legs and I thought was going to have a really big impact.

TUR: It still has legs. We're going to still report on this.

DEL PERCIO: I have no doubt. I just -- that you'll still report on it. I just don't know in the scheme of things how much oxygen it will get within the public.

HUEY-BURNS: Which is really interesting because we talk a lot -- people perceive the White House to be in this chaotic state. But when you look at things like immigration policy, it's incredibly important and tangible and actual things are happening in terms of this administration putting things forward in terms of policy.

So, you know, if you are running for office, you know, these are the kinds of things, you know, you might highlight, right? Not to say that this isn't a constant state of chaos, but actually that this is an administration that's doing stuff and doing stuff like this.

DEL PERCIO: And real quickly, there are a group of Republicans, moderate Republicans, who are fighting back, who are angry, and who are fighting back and may side with the Democrats to get something done.

TUR: That is very true. I said Rosie O'Donnell a moment ago, I meant Roseanne Barr, I'm so sorry. Donald Trump called Rosie O'Donnell a fat pig, let's not forget that. My apologies to Rosie O'Donnell for looping her into this conversation inadvertently. Caitlin, Jonathan, Susan, guys, thank you very much.

And ahead, let us pay homage to sarcasm. The Trolly, not trolly, Trolly awards are back.

TUR: In case you missed it, it's time again for our celebration of snark, our tribute to testy treats (ph), the "**MTP Daily**" Trolly Awards. The Trolly Awards Committee certainly had a bounty of riches this week. There was this epic one doctoring up the Trump-Kim summit coin to honor an entirely different Kim.

And this one from the makers of Ambien, responding to Roseanne Barr. Racism is not a known side effect of any Sanofi -- Sanofi -Sanofi - I can't say it -- medication. Hope they make a cream for that burn. Hey, not everyone can get a Trolly. It's an honor just to be nominated. That being said, we are proud to award our latest Trolly to the governor himself, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Schwarzenegger was responding to this tweet by a Bloomberg reporter saying Trump administration officials are making plans to order grid operators to buy electricity from struggling coal and nuclear plants. Schwarzenegger's response, I eagerly await the administration's regulations protecting pagers, fax machines and blockbuster.

The governor (INAUDIBLE) pagers and fax machines but blockbusters are not obsolete yet. In fact, there are nine stores left, six in Alaska. So congratulation on your Trolly, governor. I have a feeling this one will not be your last. Yep, I think there is no question, you will be returning.

That's all for tonight. I will be back Monday with more "**MTP Daily**." And don't forget, if it's Sunday, it's "Meet the Press" -

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: Show

Publication-Type: Transcript

Transcript: 060101cb.454

Subject: INVESTIGATIONS (83%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2012 (70%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2016 (70%); ESPIONAGE (70%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (70%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (69%); WITNESSES (64%); NATIONAL SECURITY (63%); PRIME MINISTERS (50%); Summit; Business; Market; Roseanne Barr; Samantha Bee; Racial Tweet; Vulgar Language; Culture War; Gavin Newsom; Michael Cohen; Immigration; Arnold Schwarzenegger; Politics; Government; Donald Trump; Constitutional Crisis; Political Crisis; Republican Party; Congress; Eric Holder; Economy; Trade; World Affairs; Tariffs; National Security; Canada; Justin Trudeau

Industry: COAL FIRED PLANTS (70%); FOSSIL FUEL POWER PLANTS (62%); COAL INDUSTRY (60%)

Person: DONALD TRUMP (88%); JUSTIN TRUDEAU (68%)

Geographic: NEW YORK, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (94%)

Load-Date: June 2, 2018

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