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POLITICS

Trump Unveils High-Powered and Well-Heeled Business Council, and Invites Filipino Strongman to White House

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President-elect Donald J. Trump is back at Trump Tower as his team takes shape, and he's staying busy.

- He invited President Rodrigo R. Duterte of the Philippines to visit the White House, despite the Filipino's ruthless campaign of extrajudicial killings and insults to President Obama.
- He named a new advisory team headed by the billionaire hedge fund titan Stephen A. Schwarzman.
- He is meeting with Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, a Democrat who seems interested in a job in Mr. Trump's cabinet, perhaps as the secretary of agriculture.

Trump's new advisory council is loaded with know-how and money.

President-elect Trump won the White House by pledging to be the champion of the blue-collar workers in Rust Belt states — people he says have been forgotten.

But that's not the profile of those Mr. Trump has advising him on economic matters and, of course, making America great again. On Friday, he announced the creation of his Strategic and Policy Forum, headed by Mr. Schwarzman, the co-founder of Blackstone, a global investment firm, and once the face of Wall Street excess in the pre-Great Recession era.

Also on the panel? A who's-who of the wealthiest chief executives from some of the nation's biggest companies, among them: Mary T. Barra of General Motors, Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase & Company, Laurence D. Fink of BlackRock, Robert A. Iger of Disney and Virginia M. Rometty of IBM.

The purpose, according to a statement released by Mr. Trump's transition team: "To provide direct input to the president from many of the best and brightest in the business world in a frank, nonbureaucratic and nonpartisan manner."

The liberal American Sustainable Business Council was not pleased.

"Trump is doubling down on crony capitalists who don't understand that a healthy economy requires a healthy planet and consumers with money in their pockets," said its co-founder, David Brodwin.

Donald Trump will meet the Filipino president.

Mr. Trump, whose unscripted telephone calls with world leaders have broken with protocol and left diplomats in Washington aghast, on Friday invited President Rodrigo R. Duterte of the Philippines to visit the White House next year, according to an aide to Mr. Duterte quoted by Reuters.

Mr. Duterte, who has been criticized by the State Department for waging a bloody and ruthless antidrug campaign that has killed about 2,000 people in the Philippines, has called President Obama a "son of a whore" and, in September, said he "can go to hell." The remarks prompted Mr. Obama to cancel a planned meeting with Mr. Duterte in Laos at a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mr. Trump has business and government connections in the Philippines, where he has partnered with a real estate company controlled by Jose E.B. Antonio, named in October as Mr. Duterte's special envoy to the United States, on a \$150 million office tower in Manila.

Officials for Mr. Trump's transition did not confirm the call or include it in a rundown they gave on Friday of conversations with world leaders that Mr. Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence had held over the past 24 hours.

They did provide official accounts on Thursday of calls Mr. Trump had with the prime minister of Pakistan and the president of Kazakhstan, but those were sanitized versions of the readouts provided by those countries, which indicated that the president-elect had heaped praise on their leaders and suggested a readiness to side with them on delicate matters of diplomacy.

A look at policies to come.

Senator David Perdue of Georgia, a Republican and an early and vocal supporter of Mr. Trump, stopped by the microphones at Trump Tower to share his views of the legislative rush to come next year.

“Job 1 is getting people put back to work — we’re talking about Obamacare, the Keystone Pipeline, the Waters in the U.S. and the Clean Power Plan,” he said, singling out the transcontinental pipeline that President Obama killed, new clean water regulations and Mr. Obama’s climate change plan.

Asked about killing the Iran nuclear deal between the Islamic Republic and the western powers, he did not hide his feelings.

“It’s not a treaty, it’s a presidential resolution and it can be reversed,” he said. “This is a very dangerous deal. It provides a pathway for Iran to become a nuclear power and you just cannot allow that.”

Supporters of the deal, including Mr. Obama and the governments of Britain, Japan, France, Germany and Russia say it will prevent Iran to develop a nuclear weapon, not facilitate it.

Tall men, unite.

Much has been said about the photo of a windblown president-elect and his tie, exposed as taped together. Well, a tall man — Brendan Buck, senior aide to House Speaker Paul D. Ryan — has come to his defense.

Trump to White House: Thanks, Obama.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.6 percent in November, while payrolls rose by 178,000, the 74th straight month of private sector gains — the longest expansion by far. Economic growth last quarter hit 3.2 percent.

Mr. Trump’s campaign painted the bleakest of portraits of the American economy, one that never really fit reality. Now, he will be taking office with a big head of steam thanks at least in part to his predecessor, President Obama.

But some economic analysts greeted the news with a note of caution.

“The president-elect still represents the mother of all uncertainties when it comes to domestic and foreign policies,” wrote **Bernard Baumohl, chief global economist for the Economic Outlook Group.**

Not the party of Reagan anymore.

Jaw-dropping quote of the morning, from Vice President-elect Mike Pence to The New York Times:

“The free market has been sorting it out and America’s been losing,” Mr. Pence added, as Mr. Trump interjected, “Every time, every time.”

Chris Christie passed over again?

Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey may be pressing his own candidacy to be the next chairman of the Republican National Committee, but Mr. Trump, who has the final say, appears to have other ideas.

A person close to Mr. Trump said the president-elect’s allies are coalescing around Nick Ayers, a member of the transition team, to be the party’s chairman. Mercedes Schlapp, another Republican operative, is being considered for a role as co-chairwoman.

Mr. Christie called Mr. Trump to put his name forward on Thursday morning, according to Politico. That was already something of a comedown from the governor’s former job leading Mr. Trump’s transition team and his aspirations to become the attorney general.

Now even the party chairmanship, which will change hands when Reince Priebus becomes Mr. Trump’s White House chief of staff, may slip out of Mr. Christie’s reach.

Fast-food chain C.E.O. rises in cabinet talk.

Andrew Puzder, the chief executive of CKE Restaurants and a financial supporter of Mr. Trump’s campaign, has gained steam as a candidate to become the secretary of labor, according to a transition official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the process.

Mr. Puzder, whose company oversees restaurant chains such as Hardee’s, has been extremely critical of Obama administration policies, including a push for a higher minimum wage and new overtime rules for workers who are considered management, but have few managerial responsibilities.

A change in tone? Not so much.

If presidential watchers were hoping for a more presidential tone in Mr. Trump’s “victory rallies,” they didn’t see much on Thursday night in Cincinnati.

“We did have a lot of fun fighting Hillary, didn’t we?” he asked.

The crowd broke into the familiar chant, “Lock her up!” as the president-elect smiled and lifted a fist.

Mr. Trump railed against the “extremely dishonest press” as the crowd chanted “fake news.” And he complained that there wasn’t “the highest-

caliber politician in Ohio,” a reference to Gov. John Kasich, who never supported Mr. Trump.

Mike Pence’s new neighbors fly gay pride flags.

Many across the nation may rally around the new commander in chief and Vice President-elect Pence, but some in the District of Columbia probably won’t.

Incidentally ...

Hillary Clinton’s lead over Mr. Trump in the popular vote inched up on Thursday night to 2,564,276 — nearly a flat 2 percentage points. Minnesota and Massachusetts certified their totals, but votes keep trickling in from California.

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