Twitter Thread by Jake Sherman



Jake Sherman
@JakeSherman



G’morning from the Capitol, where we’re about to have a pro forma session in both chambers during which nothing will get done. This begins at 9

In the meantime, here’s what we said in Playbook this morning.

Headline: "Cyclone of uncertainty and chaos"

WITH 27 DAYS LEFT IN HIS PRESIDENCY, and the nation on the doorstep of Christmas, DONALD JOHN TRUMP has sucked Americans into a violent cyclone of uncertainty and chaos.

HE IS PARDONING CRIMINALS at a breakneck clip. Last night it was MANAFORT, who was in prison on tax charges, R STONE and CHARLES KUSHNER, IVANKA's father in law. Earlier this week crooked politicians and other unseemly actors. @BenSasse called the pardons “rotten to the core.”

@BenSasse >@maggieNYT and @nytmike put it this way: TRUMP “is at perhaps his most unleashed.”

@BenSasse @maggieNYT @nytmike TRUMP -- as he has so many times before -- has thrown the government he is supposed to be leading into an intractable crisis.

@BenSasse @maggieNYT @nytmike WE SPOKE TO A FEW PEOPLE IN TOUCH with the president and they say this: he has come to think that this fight he has pitched -- teasing a veto on a covid/funding bill that his administration negotiated -- is playing well with Americans, these people said.

@BenSasse @maggieNYT @nytmike TRUMP believes he’s highlighting what he considers to be wasteful foreign spending -- never mind he proposed much of it -- and is pushing for $2,000 checks in place of the $600 checks his underlings and party agreed to.

BUT HERE’S WHAT WON’T PLAY WELL WITH THE BASE: the social safety net our country is supposed to provide is about to be ripped away in the middle of the holiday season. On Saturday, pandemic unemployment assistance -- used by gig workers -- runs out.

On Dec. 31, pandemic emergency unemployment compensation -- which lengthened UI -- runs out, as does the eviction moratorium and the medical expense deduction. All gone unexpectedly unless the president signs the $2-trillion package.

OF ALL THE LEGISLATIVE BATTLES TRUMP has pitched, this is the most dangerous and befuddling. Here's what's on deck:

-- THERE'S THE UNCERTAINTY about whether he will sign the Covid-bus package to avoid a government shutdown next week.

-- IF TRUMP DOESN'T SIGN IT, how will they avoid a government shutdown Monday night? Will he sign anything?

-- SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI will force a Monday, full-House, up-or-down vote on $2,000 checks. Will Republicans vote for it? Because we know Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans are likely to ignore it.

-- WILL CONGRESS BE ABLE to override TRUMP'S NDAA veto?

IN HIS FINAL INTVW IN 1973, LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON told WALTER CRONKITE that antagonizing Congress is never a good idea because it's like a pilot having a co-pilot flying in different directions.

TRUMP HAS taken it a step further. He has pressed the ejection seat on his allies

HE'S PUBLICLY TURNED ON MCCONNELL and JOHN THUNE, the top two Republicans in the Senate. The only ally he has left in the leadership is KEVIN MCCARTHY, who sent a letter to House Republicans last night criticizing a deal he was a party to and voted for.

MCCONNELL, who was elected a few weeks ago with his largest margin in 18 years, has practically no political incentive to pacify TRUMP at this point.

If worse comes to worst, he'll have a better hand in a few weeks with JOE BIDEN in the White House. BIDEN'S a Democrat, but at least you know his administration's word is likely to be good.

AS WE SAID WEDNESDAY, pretty much all of the president's allies recognize this fit is mostly about TRUMP'S frustration with lawmakers who have been publicly acknowledging his time in the White House is drawing to a close.

Trump's remaining Hill allies -- all in the House -- are convincing TRUMP that he has a chance of overturning electoral results Jan. 6, and that he should veto this bill -- both deep rabbit holes without exit paths.

WE'RE STARING DOWN THE POSSIBILITY OF A SHUTDOWN. Make no mistake about that.

The hope in some corners of the Capitol is that the House/Senate come back Mon -- House will be, but who knows if the Sen will be back -- and they pass a stopgap to keep the govt funded into Jan. But why would the president sign that if this truly has little to do with policy?

RIGHT NOW, Republicans tell us they have one goal: keep TRUMP calm and hope he changes his mind and signs the bill.

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TODAY: House Democrats -- likely House Majority Leader STENY HOYER -- are going to offer the $2,000 check bill on the floor. That will be blocked by Republicans.

Republicans are going to offer to strip all the foreign money out of the bill they just passed, and replace it with a stopgap measure. Democrats will block that. We'll then be back at square one.

THIS CONGRESS STARTED SHUT DOWN, and it could end shut down. In between, we've had an impeachment and a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic.