

THREE THINGS: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CABLE, MABEL. OH, AND THE MOOCH

If last night's Twitter timeline was any measure, folks have a LOT to say about premium cable programming let alone the cable television industry. Add the crazy surrounding White House communications and it's best if I just get out of the way and run like hell.

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I simply can't write fast enough or better about the situation than many folks have on Twitter already.



Basta.

~ 2 ~

Crazy amount of chatter about cable networks and M&A. Biggest stories:

Discovery to buy HGTV's owner Scripps because of Scripps' audience demographics – heavily weighted toward women.

Charter Communications will not merge with Sprint to expand into cell phone business; it

already has a reseller agreement with Verizon.

However, Japan's Softbank, Sprint's parent, is interested in buying Charter Communications. This deserves debate in Congress as well as CFIUS review. There's a reason why Charter isn't Cable but Communications now; do we want additional foreign ownership of another communications network even if it isn't fully into the cell phone business (yet)?

Should note here that a beef I have with my GOP representative on regulating cable networks is on this very point. Rep-who-will-not-be-named sent a pro forma response spouting what is probably party line: FTC has always regulated cable, shouldn't increase regulation by allowing cable to be regulated by FCC.

Except that cable isn't just a series of tubes distributing entertainment content. It's also a series of tubes carrying our communications.

Again, do we want to allow foreign ownership of these particular communications tube in addition to existing cell phone network ownership?

~ 1 ~

By now you may have heard HBO's most popular series, Game of Thrones, may have been affected by a breach of the cable network's system. Based on conflicting reports, it's not clear what was stolen from HBO, though unlike other recent hacks HBO itself was attacked and not a content creator/producer. It may sound reminiscent of the Sony Entertainment hack but HBO is nowhere as leaky as Sony.

Will winter still come after this hack? You'll have to tell me – this isn't a series I follow.

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There you have it, your next open thread. Trump-Russia stuff in the last one, please. Everything else here.