

'Stop whining,' Obama tells Trump

Associated Press



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
President Barack Obama answer a question during a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi at the White House Tuesday.

WASHINGTON — “Stop whining,” President Barack Obama rebuked Donald Trump on Tuesday, speaking out as seldom before on next month’s election and chiding the Republican for sowing suspicion about the integrity of America’s presidential vote.

Obama also accused Trump of cozying up to Russia’s Vladimir Putin to a degree “unprecedented in American politics.”

The president said Trump’s intensifying pre-emptive warnings about voter fraud are unheard of in modern politics. The rhetoric is not based on any evidence, Obama said, but is simply aimed at discrediting the outcome before the first votes are counted.

“You start whining before the game is even over?” Obama said at a Rose Garden news conference. “If whenever things are going badly for you and you lose you start blaming somebody else — then you don’t have what it takes to be in this job.”

Campaigning in Colorado, the GOP candidate repeated his assertions about “corrupt” elections but did not respond directly to the president. Trump vowed to “drain the swamp” in Washington, and for the first time promised to push for a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress.

The president’s remarks came as Trump and his Republican allies look for ways to regain momentum after a damaging few weeks in the campaign. Heading into the third and final debate Wednesday night, Trump is trailing in the polls and running out of time for a comeback before Nov. 8.

Obama waded into the race to elect a successor, speaking at the White House where he was hosting his final state visit. Italy’s Prime Minister Matteo Renzi at his side, the president initially said he would pull his punches when

it came to politics, respecting the official setting. But when he was asked about Trump’s rhetoric, he hardly held back.

“I would invite Mr. Trump to stop whining and go try to make his case to get votes,” he said.

The GOP candidate has ramped up warnings about potential fraud. That’s drawing criticism not only from Democrats but from his own party, particularly the state and county officials who run local elections, who fear the rhetoric will give losers license to dispute any results.

“They even want to try and rig the election at the polling booth, where so many cities are corrupt and you see that and voter fraud is all too common,” Trump said at a rally in Colorado Springs.

Independent studies and election officials in both parties say they see no evidence that voter fraud — individuals impersonating others to cast ballots — is a widespread problem.

Asked about Trump’s claims on Tuesday, running mate Mike Pence dodged and suggested Trump’s point actually was about the “overwhelming bias in the national media.”

Pence spoke after touring the burned-out offices of the Republican Party in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

The GOP office was fire-bombed over the weekend in what Pence called an “act of political terrorism.” Trump pointed at Clinton supporters, but Pence did not assign blame. Police are investigating.

Clinton held no public events Tuesday while she prepared for the debate. She has her own troubles and is certain to be asked about the latest revelations involving her use of a private email server during her time as secretary of state.

New FBI documents released Monday revived questions about whether she received classified information and whether State Department allies sought to protect her from criticism over the email arrangement.

The FBI notes show a State Department official asked the FBI to lower the classification of a sensitive email found on her server. The email was related to the attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, Libya.

The documents revealed discussion of a “quid pro quo” in trying to get the email reclassified, though it’s not clear who first raised the issue. Both State and FBI officials deny any bargaining took place, and the email was not declassified.

Trump called it an “elaborate and deliberate

cover-up” and called for the State Department official, Undersecretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy, to be fired.

The Republican is hoping to turn the conversation away from the allegations of sexual misconduct that partly dominated his last debate against Clinton.

In an interview with Fox News aired Tuesday, Melania Trump vouched for her husband and blamed the accusations on political rivals: “They want to damage the presidency of my husband, and it was all planned, it was all organized from the opposition.”

Her comments carried echoes of Clinton’s allegations of a “vast right-wing conspiracy” organized to raise similar allegations against her husband two decades ago. Trump notably tried to revive Bill Clinton’s history by inviting his accusers to the last debate. His guest list for Wednesday’s faceoff in Las Vegas includes Pat Smith, whose son, Sean Smith, was killed in the attack in Benghazi. Smith was a featured speaker at the Republican National Convention, where she delivered an emotional speech blaming Clinton for her son’s death.

As for Russia, Obama accused Trump of showering praise and modeling his policies on Russian President Putin to a degree that is “unprecedented in American politics.”

He said he has been “surprised and troubled” by Republican lawmakers who he said are echoing their presidential nominee’s positions. Trump has praised Putin as a strong leader and criticized Obama and Clinton for Washington’s deteriorating relationship with Moscow.

In an interview Monday, Trump said Russia “can’t stand” either Democrat. He promised a closer relationship with Putin, if elected, starting with a possible meeting before Inauguration Day.

A surprisingly high number of first-timers now buying homes

WASHINGTON (AP) — For years, the U.S. housing market looked bleak for young couples hoping to buy their first homes but struggling with high student debt, low pay and meager down-payment savings.

But a new survey by the real estate firm Zillow suggests that first-time buyers may be entering the market in greater numbers than industry watchers had assumed.

Over the past year, the survey found, nearly half of home sales have gone to first-timers. That’s a much higher proportion than some other industry estimates had indicated. And it comes as a surprise in part because ownership rates for adults under 34 are at their lowest levels since the government began tracking the figure in 1994.

Zillow’s survey results suggest that the trend is shifting, and that some of this year’s growth in home sales has come from a wave of college-educated couples in their 30s, who are the most common first-time buyers.

In suburban Minneapolis, few first-time buyers have enough savings for a down payment, and many rely on gifts or loans from relatives, said Marcus Johannes, an agent with Edina Realty.

If the pattern in Zillow’s survey holds, it could raise hopes that today’s vast generation of 18-to-34-year-old millennials will help support the housing market as more of them move into their 30s.

The 168-page report that Seattle-based Zillow released Tuesday also found that home ownership is increasingly the domain of the college-educated. And it reported that older Americans who are looking

to downsize are paying premiums for smaller houses.

Here’s a breakdown of Zillow’s key findings:

— Forty-seven percent of purchases in the past year went to first-time buyers. Their median age was 33. By contrast, surveys from the National Association of Realtors have indicated that first-timers account for only about 32 percent of buyers.

The difference between the two surveys may stem from their methodologies. The NAR has used a mail-based survey for its annual figures. Zillow used an online survey that might have generated a greater response rate from younger buyers.

Zillow’s findings might help explain a persistent shortage of homes for sale: Unlike move-up buyers, first-time purchasers don’t have a home to list for sale, thereby depriving the market of supply.

Adam DeSanctis, an NAR spokesman, noted that his organization’s own survey, due out later this month, will show a rising share of first-time buyers, though it will remain below the historical average of 39 percent that’s prevailed since the organization began tracking this figure in 1982.

— No college? Dwindling chance of homeownership.

It’s become harder to realize the dream of home ownership without a college degree. Sixty-two percent of buyers have at least a four-year college degree. Census figures show that just 33 percent of the U.S. adults graduated from college. The gap indicates that workers with only a high school degree are becoming less likely to own a home.

IS increasingly driven underground

BADANA, Iraq (AP) — This farming village east of Mosul was turned into a bunker during more than two years of Islamic State rule: A network of tunnels and cramped living quarters betrays an extremist group increasingly forced to operate underground by a punishing air campaign and mounting territorial losses.

Wrested from IS control on the first day of the offensive to retake Iraq’s second-largest city, Badana offers a glimpse of the battle ahead.

Above ground, walls were shredded by airstrikes and artillery, homes were stained black with soot and the buildings still standing had been looted.

Below ground, bags of fresh vegetables lay on the floor of a cooking area and a bowl of eggs sat beside a crude stove, suggesting the fighters managed to maintain supply lines up until days before their defeat.

“They spent their lives in these tunnels,” said Tahseen Muhammed Sharif, a 35-year-old Kurdish fighter who said the Kurdish forces who drove the militants out of the village also found ammunition inside the tunnel network, which they seized.

“I can’t imagine living like this,” he added, sifting through kitchen refuse beside a pot of chickpeas still sitting on the stove. “There is a definite difference between us and them — their behavior, it’s outside human behavior.”

A small unit of Iraqi Kurdish fighters tasked with holding the territory in and around the city of Badana were camped Tuesday in a field behind a row of armored vehicles on the village’s edge.

While free of IS fighters, the area remains littered with dozens of booby-trapped explosives. Kurdish fighters moving along the narrow village roads stuck to paths

they had already used and walked in single file.

When Iraqi forces reach Mosul, Patrick Martin of the Institute for the Study of War in Washington said they should expect to see similar complex defenses like the tunnel networks and booby-trapped explosives in Badana, but on a much greater scale.

“They’re making sure that whenever the operation to retake the city commences it will be extremely difficult for the security forces to do so,” Martin said, adding that while there are reports of some IS fighters fleeing Mosul, the group has also displayed a willingness to defend the city by mobilizing car bombs, suicide bombers and building trenches.

STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Braydon Postma
PILOT ROCK HIGH SCHOOL

Pilot Rock High School student of the week is Braydon Postma. Braydon is an outstanding student, carrying a 4.0 GPA in to his senior year. He is a member of National Honor Society, FFA and a three sport athlete throughout high school. He actively participates in classes and always encourages other students. He is a friend to all and meets everyone with a smile. PRHS is a better place because of Braydon. Congratulations on this honor.

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