

# Trump hugs ally Japan after easing U.S.-China tensions

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, fresh off patching up ties with China, reassured Japan's leader Friday that the U.S. will defend its close ally. Together, the pronouncements illustrated a shift toward a more mainstream Trump stance on U.S. policy toward Asia.

Welcoming Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the White House with a hug, Trump said he wants to bring the post-World War II alliance with Japan "even closer." While such calls are ritual after these types of meetings, from Trump they're sure to calm anxieties that he has stoked by demanding that America's partners pay more for their own defense.

Abe, a nationalist adept at forging relationships with self-styled strongmen overseas, was the only world leader to meet the Republican before his inauguration. He is now the second to do so since Trump took office. Flattering the billionaire businessman, Abe said he would welcome the United States becoming "even greater."

He also invited Trump to visit Japan this year. Trump accepted, according to a joint statement.

Other leaders of America's closest neighbors and allies, such as Mexico, Britain and Australia, have been singled by their encounters or conversations with Trump.

But the optics Friday were positive. After a working lunch on economic issues, the two leaders boarded Air Force One with their wives for a trip to Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida. They dined with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft at the club Friday night. Trump and Abe are scheduled to play golf Saturday.

Their Oval Office meeting came hours after Trump reaffirmed Washington's long-standing "one China" policy in a call with Chinese President Xi Jinping. That



President Donald Trump looks toward Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the conclusion of a joint news conference in the East Room of the White House, in Washington, Friday.

statement will similarly ease anxieties in East Asia after Beijing was angered and other capitals were rattled by earlier suggestions that he might use Taiwan as leverage in trade, security and other negotiations.

Although Japan is a historic rival of China, Trump said that his long and "warm" conversation with Xi was good for Tokyo, too.

"I believe that will all work out very well for everybody, China, Japan, the United States and everybody in the region," Trump said at a joint news conference with Abe.

Stepping carefully into Japan's longstanding territorial dispute with China over uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, Trump said the U.S. is committed to the security of Japan and all areas under its administrative control. The implication was that the U.S.-Japan defense treaty covers the disputed islands, which Japan which calls the Senkaku, but China calls the Diaoyu.

Beijing opposes such statements, but Trump's wording allowed for some diplomatic wiggle room. The joint statement released later was more explicit, however, in spelling out the U.S. commitment.

Abe has championed a

more active role for Japan's military. He has eased constraints imposed by the nation's pacifist post-war constitution and allowed forces to defend allies, even if Japan itself is not under attack.

As a candidate, Trump urged even greater self-reliance, at one point even raising the notion of Japan and South Korea developing their own nuclear weapons as a deterrent to North Korea.

He made no similar remark Friday, and according to Japanese officials, did not raise the issue of cost-sharing for defense. Instead he thanked Japan for hosting nearly 50,000 American troops, which also serve as a counterweight to China's increased regional influence. He said freedom of navigation and dealing with North Korea's missile and nuclear threats are a "very high priority."

There was less agreement on economics.

One of Trump's first actions as president was to withdraw the U.S. from a 12-nation, trans-Pacific trade agreement that was negotiated by the Obama administration and strongly supported by Tokyo.

Diverting from Trump's stance that the Trans-Pa-

**"I believe that will all work out very well for everybody."**

— Donald Trump

cific Partnership is bad for America, Abe stressed the importance of a "free and fair common set of rules" for trade among the world's most dynamic economies.

"That was the purpose of TPP. That importance has not changed," Abe said through an interpreter, though both leaders held out the possibility of a future bilateral, U.S.-Japanese deal.

Trump has also criticized Toyota Motor Corp. for planning to build an assembly plant in Mexico and has complained Japanese don't buy enough U.S.-made cars — though on Friday, Japanese government spokesman Norio Maruyama said Trump expressed appreciation to Abe for Japanese investment in the U.S. and looked forward to it expanding.

Abe told U.S. business leaders Friday that "a whopping majority" of the Japanese cars running on American roads are manufactured in the U.S. by American workers. That includes 70 percent of Toyotas. Abe said Japanese business supports some 840,000 jobs in the United States.

That may not be enough for Trump, who is highly sensitive to U.S. trade deficits.

Japan logged the second-largest surplus with the U.S. last year, behind only China, and there had been some expectation Abe would use the visit to propose new Japanese investments to help Trump spur American job growth. There was no such announcement Friday — only agreement to launch a high-level dialogue on economic cooperation.



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses local administrators after the government has sacked nearly 4,500 more state employees, including academicians, in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday.

## Turkey's Erdogan approves voting on powerful presidency

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday approved holding a national referendum on constitutional reforms that would usher in a powerful presidency, a change he has strongly advocated.

Erdogan signed off on the bill, paving the way for the country's electoral board to set a date for the referendum.

The bill envisions granting the office of the presidency — currently a largely ceremonial position — the power to appoint government ministers and senior officials, dissolve parliament, declare states of emergency, issue decrees and appoint half of the members in the country's highest judicial body. Parliament had approved the reform package in hotly, and at times violently, debated sessions last month.

The proposed changes were backed by a majority of lawmakers in the assembly but failed to clear the threshold needed to come into force without a public vote.

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said the referendum was likely to be held on April 26.

A change to the presidential system would be a crowning achievement for Erdogan, who has outmaneuvered and crushed all his major foes.

Critics say it would concentrate even more power in the hands of a leader they accuse of authoritarian behavior with little tolerance for dissent.

### Police disperse protests against university purges

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Police have used tear gas to disperse protesters trying to enter Ankara University to denounce a government decree that dismissed 330 academics. At least five protesters were detained.

The academics were among some 4,500 civil servants that were sacked Tuesday under the state of emergency declared following a failed coup attempt in July. Although introduced to deal with the alleged perpetrators of the coup, critics say the government is using emergency powers to pursue all opponents.

On Friday, police dispersed students, teachers, civic society representatives and some opposition legislators who gathered outside the prestigious faculty of political science, where some 20 staff members were dismissed.

Campaigning for and against the reforms has begun with supporters of the bill having the upper hand and dominating air time.

Opponents of the bill complain that they cannot get their views across to the public in a country where most opposition media has been silenced.

## White House regroup after stinging legal defeat

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seeking to regroup after a stinging legal defeat, President Donald Trump said Friday he is considering signing a "brand new order" after his refugee and immigration travel ban was halted in court.

Trump, speaking to reporters on Air Force One as he flew to Florida for the weekend, said he expected his administration to win the legal battle over his original directive. But he said the White House was also weighing other alternatives, including making changes to the order, which suspended the nation's refugee program and barred all entries from seven Muslim-majority countries.

The president said a new executive order would likely change "very little" from the first.

Trump's comments came a day after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a restraining order on the original travel ban. While a White House official initially suggested the administration would not ask the Supreme Court to overturn that order, chief of staff Reince Priebus later said "every single court option is on the table," including a high court appeal.

Priebus said the administration was also considering "fighting out this case on the merits" in a lower court.

Trump's executive order was hastily unveiled at the end of his first week in office. It caused chaos at airports in the U.S. and sparked protests across the country.

The president has cast the order as crucial for national security. Earlier Friday, he promised to take action "very rapidly" to protect the U.S. and its citizens in the wake of the appeals court decision, but he did not specify what steps he planned to take.

"We'll be doing things to continue to make our country safe," Trump pledged at a news conference with Japa-

nese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. "It will happen rapidly. We will not allow people into our country who are looking to do harm to our people."

The president's comments were far more restrained than his angry reaction to last week's initial court ruling blocking the travel ban. Trump took aim at both the "so-called judge" in that case and the ruling, which he called "ridiculous."

Trump continued to conjure images of unspecified danger Friday, saying he had "learned tremendous things that you could only learn, frankly, if you were in a certain position, namely president. And there are tremendous threats to our country. We will not allow that to happen, I can tell you that. We will not allow that to happen."

The 9th Circuit ruling represented a significant setback for Trump in just his third week in office. The appellate decision brushed aside arguments by the Justice Department that the president has the constitutional power to restrict entry to the United States and that

the courts cannot second-guess his determination that such a step was needed to prevent terrorism.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer tweeted that Trump "ought to see the writing on the wall" and abandon the proposal. The New York Democrat called on the president to "roll up his sleeves" and come up with "a real, bipartisan plan to keep us safe."

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California promised, "Democrats will continue to press for President Trump's dangerous and unconstitutional ban to be withdrawn." And Trump's former presidential rival Hillary Clinton offered a terse response on Twitter, noting the unanimous vote: "3-0."

Congress' Republican leaders, House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, declined to comment.

U.S. District Judge James Robart in Seattle issued the temporary restraining order halting the ban after Washington state and Minnesota sued, leading to the federal

government's appeal.

The Trump administration has said the seven nations — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — have raised terrorism concerns. The states have argued that the executive order unconstitutionally blocked entry based on religion and the travel ban harmed individuals, businesses and universities.

Trump and his aides frequently refer to a ruling by a federal judge in Boston who declined last week to extend a temporary injunction against Trump's travel ban. In a separate federal ruling in Seattle, a different federal judge put the ban on hold nationwide; it is that judge's decision that the White House has challenged.

"It's a decision that we'll win, in my opinion, very easily and, by the way, we won that decision in Boston," Trump said.

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