

# White House staffers on edge as Trump eyes another shake-up

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is tired of being told “no.”

Six weeks of staff churn and pronouncement shocks reflect a president who has grown increasingly confident on the job and more trusting of his instincts. After 14 months in the Oval Office, Trump is more comfortable bucking the advice of White House staffers and congressional Republicans, and that is increasingly putting even his allies on edge.

Trump may have an even more dramatic shake-up in mind for his administration.

The president has floated to outside advisers a plan to do away with the traditional West Wing power structure, including the formal chief of staff role, to create the more free-wheeling atmosphere he relished while running his business and later his presidential campaign at Trump Tower.

The sense of apprehension is palpable in the West Wing, where tempers are running short and uneasy aides discuss their future employment prospects behind closed doors, according to six White House officials and several outside advisers. They all spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the internal dynamics.

Recent blows to staff confidence have been almost exclusively instigated by the president himself. He congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin on his re-election and didn't chide him about the tainted vote or the poisoning of a spy on British soil. He pushed forward with steel and aluminum tariffs, prompting his chief economic adviser to quit. And he agreed to meet with



AP Photo/Susan Walsh  
President Donald Trump walks across the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Friday, March 23, 2018, as he heads to Marine One of a short trip to Andrews Air Force Base. Trump is heading to Florida where he will spend the weekend at the Mar-a-Lago estate.

## China targets \$3 billion of U.S. goods in tariff spat

BEIJING (AP) — China announced a \$3 billion list of U.S. goods for possible retaliation in a tariff dispute with President Donald Trump and girded Friday for a bigger battle over technology policy as financial markets sank on fears of global disruption.

The Commerce Ministry said higher duties on pork, apples, steel pipe and other goods would offset Chinese losses due to Trump's tariff hike on steel and aluminum imports. It urged Washington to negotiate a settlement but set no deadline.

Trump said Friday that he was not concerned that the tariffs would be a drag on the stock market. He added: “China is going to end up treating us fairly.”

In a separate and potentially bigger

dispute, the ministry criticized Trump's decision Thursday to approve a possible tariff hike on Chinese imports worth up to \$60 billion over Beijing's technology policy. It gave no indication of a possible response but a foreign ministry spokeswoman said Beijing was “fully prepared to defend” its interests.

“We don't want a trade war, but we are not afraid of it,” said the spokeswoman, Hua Chunying.

On Wall Street, stocks were mixed Friday, but Asian financial markets sank on concern the escalating tensions might disrupt the biggest global trading relationship or lead other nations to raise import barriers.

North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un to the surprise of many national security officials.

Thursday's announcement of National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster's impending exit continued the trend.

The two men never clicked personally, and Trump was known to complain when he saw

extended meetings with the national security adviser on his schedule. Trump also, as he did with fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, grew frustrated when McMaster would try to curb some of his instincts on international relations, according to White House officials and outside advisers.

Now he has turned to former U.N. Ambassador

John Bolton, whom Trump described to one outside confidant as “a killer” on television and likely to forcefully advocate for the president's beliefs, despite sometimes divergent views on American intervention overseas, according to a person familiar with the president's views but not authorized to discuss them publicly.

## Retailers react for ‘assault weapon’ sales ban initiative

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — As students and their supporters prepare to march in communities across the country against gun violence on Saturday, Oregon gun retailers claim a citizen initiative petition intending to restrict the sale of so-called “assault weapons” is too broad.

One of the petitioners, though, maintains that the petition was written in consultation with gun owners and is intended to boost public safety.

The group, which filed an updated petition Thursday, wants to get a ban on the sale of certain semiautomatic guns with specific features on the statewide ballot. They must collect about 88,000 signatures by July 6 to go before voters in November.

Should the petition make it to the ballot and get approved by voters, people who legally bought the types of guns the petition seeks to restrict would have to register those weapons and pass a background check, requirements that have also prompted criticism from gun retailers.

Violating the law would be a felony.

At issue for gun retailers is the definition of “assault weapons,” which the petition describes in detail as semiautomatic rifles, pistols or shotguns with certain features.

As an example, the measure would ban the sale of semiautomatic rifles that have the capacity to accept a detachable magazine and include any of eight features, such as a pistol grip, a folding stock or a shroud around its barrel that allows the user to hold the rifle steady without burning their hand.

It would ban the sale of any semiautomatic pistol or rifle “with a fixed magazine, that has the capacity to accept more than 10 rounds of ammunition.”

Karl Durkheimer, who

owns Northwest Armory, a retailer with locations in Portland and Tigard, said that he was still trying to figure out how much of his inventory would fall under the petition's definition of an assault weapon.

He expressed doubts that the measure was written by someone familiar with firearms.

“As someone who has sold guns, been a gun dealer for over 25 years, and been collecting guns since I was 16 years old, it's not written by people who have very much gun knowledge,” Durkheimer said in a phone interview Thursday.

Scott Bryce, co-founder of GunRunner Arms in Junction City, likewise objected to the use of the term “assault weapon” in the petition.

“Assault is an action, not a class of firearm,” Bryce said.

This was a common criticism among Oregon gun dealers contacted by the EO/Pamplin Capital Bureau, who distinguish between fully automatic and semi-automatic weapons.

The former have generally been illegal for civilians under federal law for decades.

An automatic weapon fires continuously when you pull the trigger once. By contrast, a semi-automatic weapon fires a single shot when you pull the trigger and automatically reloads between shots. Many “modern” guns sold and collected are semiautomatic guns.

Durkheimer was also skeptical of the initiative petition's provision for creating a registry for people who own those certain types of guns and having them go through a background check.

The way it works now, a person who wants to purchase a gun from a licensed dealer is subject to a state and federal background check.



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