

Courting Putin, Trump jolts the West with a nationalist bent

By **MATTHEW LEE AND JOSH LEDERMAN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Donald Trump presses ahead with plans for a summer summit with Russia's Vladimir Putin, the U.S. president is jolting relationships with some of America's longest and strongest allies. Amid concerns over Trump's apparent desire to be cozy with the Russian leader, he is pursuing increasingly nationalistic foreign and trade policies and delivering scathing personal attacks on traditionally friendly leaders who don't share his views.

The White House announced Thursday that national security adviser John Bolton would travel to Moscow next week, after stops in London and Rome, to discuss the potential Trump-Putin meeting, expected to be held in the Austrian capital of Vienna in the days following NATO's July 11-12 leaders' summit in Brussels. Administration officials say a White House advance team has traveled to Vienna to scout locations and make other logistical preparations for a summit should it come off.

Bolton's stops in Britain and Italy may be designed to assuage nervous Europeans about Trump's intentions for the Putin meeting, which would come just weeks after Trump stunned European allies by suggesting that Russia should be re-admitted to the Group of Seven club of industrialized economies without forsaking its annexation of Crimea for which it was expelled in 2014.

Yet the hawkish Bolton's discussions in the Euro-



AP Photo/Evan Vuoci

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo listens as President Donald Trump speaks during a cabinet meeting at the White House, Thursday in Washington.

pean capitals are unlikely to smooth over what are becoming widening fractures in the trans-Atlantic relationship that the president has seemed to welcome.

To Trump, the tough approach to allies constitutes a long-needed reassertion of U.S. sovereignty following a worrying period of decline in which Washington was too deferential, too politically correct on the world stage and too trusting of global institutions to look out for America's best interests. Those who complain that the status quo is being upended, Trump argues, are correct — and missing the point.

And the list of spurned parties is quickly growing. Trump's pursuit of his "America First" agenda has put the U.S. at odds with the rest of the G-7 democracies, sowed major divisions with Europe and Canada and risks altering the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific.

Nowhere, though, have the tensions crystalized more than in Europe, where concerns about Moscow are visceral and closer to home. In recent weeks, Trump has

attacked Germany's chancellor, ignored her and the leaders of Britain and France, embraced Italy's new populist prime minister and congratulated Hungary's authoritarian premier.

The result has alarmed many who view the trans-Atlantic partnership to be a bedrock of post-World War II international stability and security. But it has also left America isolated as administration promises that "America First does not mean America Alone" appear to fall by the wayside.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in a speech in Los Angeles this week about democracy, warned the mounting damage to the trans-Atlantic partnership "could be irreparable."

"I believe that the United States needs partners, and it needs these partners," Steinmeier said. "However, America can only recognize such a partnership if it regards the 'West' as more than a geographical term, and the world as more than a boxing ring in which everyone fights against everyone else."

High Court: Online shoppers must pay sales tax

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

States will be able to force more people to pay sales tax when they make online purchases under a Supreme Court decision Thursday that will leave shoppers with lighter wallets but is a big financial win for states.

Consumers can expect to see sales tax charged on more online purchases — likely over the next year and potentially before the Christmas shopping season — as states and retailers react to the court's decision, said one attorney involved in the case.

The Supreme Court's 5-4 opinion Thursday overruled a pair of decades-old decisions that states said cost them billions of dollars in lost revenue annually. The decisions made it more difficult for states to collect sales tax on certain online purchases, and more than 40 states had asked the high court for action. Five states don't charge sales tax.

The cases the court overturned said that if a business was shipping a customer's purchase to a state where the business didn't have a physical presence such as a warehouse or office, the business didn't have to collect sales tax for the state. Customers were generally responsible for paying the sales tax to the state themselves if they weren't charged it, but most didn't realize they owed it and few paid.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the previous decisions were flawed.

"Each year the physical presence rule becomes further removed from economic reality and results in significant revenue losses to the States," he wrote in an opinion joined by Justices Clarence Thomas, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Samuel Alito and



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File

In this 2017 file photo, the Supreme Court in Washington is seen at sunset.

Neil Gorsuch. Kennedy wrote that the rule "limited States' ability to seek long-term prosperity and has prevented market participants from competing on an even playing field."

The ruling is a victory for big chains with a presence in many states, since they usually collect sales tax on online purchases already. Now, rivals will be charging sales tax where they hadn't before.

Big chains have been collecting sales tax nationwide because they typically have physical stores in whatever state a purchase is being shipped to. Amazon.com, with its network of warehouses, also collects sales tax in every state that charges it, though third-party sellers who use the site don't have to.

Until now, many sellers that have a physical presence in only a single state or a few states have been able to avoid charging sales taxes when they ship to addresses outside those states. Online sellers that haven't been charging sales tax on goods shipped to every state range from jewelry website Blue Nile to pet products site Chewy.com to clothing retailer L.L. Bean.

Sellers that use eBay and Etsy, which provide platforms for smaller sellers, also haven't been collecting sales tax nationwide.

Under the ruling Thursday, states can pass laws requiring out-of-state sellers to collect the state's sales tax from customers and send it to the state. More than a dozen states have already adopted laws like that ahead of the court's decision, according to state tax policy expert Joseph Crosby.

Retail trade groups praised the ruling, saying it levels the playing field for local and online businesses. The losers, said retail analyst Neil Saunders, are online-only retailers, especially smaller ones. Those retailers may face headaches complying with various state sales tax laws.

Chief Justice John Roberts and three of his colleagues would have kept the court's previous decisions in place.

He was joined by Justices Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor. The lineup of justices on each side of the case was unusual with Roberts joining three more liberal justices and Ginsburg joining her more conservative colleagues.

HARMONY: At our age, none of us needs anything

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Loop Road now work, and so they're not able. That's what's different now than 80 years ago."

Meetings take place at 10 a.m. every other Monday, with summers off. Club members take turns hosting. They have snacks or dessert, read the minutes of the last meeting and do a "roll call" asking everyone to give an update on what has been going on in their lives since they last met.

"Some of us only pull weeds, that's our highlight," Pomeroy said, laughing.

To get to know each other better, they have also added a second question, which has ranged from "What's the worst haircut you've gotten?" to "What are your pet peeves?"

There is plenty of time for more informal chatting — which the club's officers said frequently includes recipe-sharing — but each gathering must include a simple game presented by the host, usually along the

lines of a current events quiz, guessing game or word puzzle. The winner gets a prize, which has shifted over time from a box of Jell-O or cake mix to more permanent household items.

Van De Brake said she would be fine with going back to food for prizes.

"None of us at our age needs a thing," she said. "We're all trying to downsize."

While the Harmony Club's current members try to adhere to tradition and the club's bylaws, there are a few that they have let slide by the wayside. Meeting minutes from the early years stated that the women decided to only wear print dresses to meetings.

"Well, we don't do that anymore," Wagner said.

The club's scrapbook, which includes pictures and letters between members, was lost for a few years, but Pomeroy finally managed to track it down again.

Despite dwindling numbers, they have hope for a



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Polly Van De Brake, right, holds a scrapbook detailing the Harmony Club's history with Pat Wagner (left) and Carol Pomeroy (top).

future generation of Harmony Club members interested in the past.

"We just hang on" Van

De Brake said.

— Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

VFW: Building believed to be erected around 1910

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The city has owned the VFW building at 210 Bridge Street since January 2016, when the Echo chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars consolidated with the Pendleton chapter and the group donated the building to the city. They have since used it for council meetings and allowed community groups like 4H to meet there for free. The city's library also stores the books it sells through Amazon there and uses it for a children's story time.

"It's kind of a library annex," Berry said.

The project to update

the building was paid for by grants from the Echo Community Benefit Plan, Kinsman Foundation and Wildhorse Foundation.

During Thursday's meeting in the newly-remodeled hall, the council approved a request from Echo Ridge Cellars for three events in July, including Echo's annual school reunion, to be able to have noise outside until 11 p.m. instead of 10 p.m. Winery director Kim Bales said the music would be stopping by 10 p.m. for each event but she wanted to cover her bases in case people were standing outside talking after that.

ODOT: 'The law is a pretty sticky wicket'

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on whether she made the post during work hours and whether her comment is protected free speech under the U.S. Constitution, said Scott N. Hunt, a partner at Busse & Hunt, a Portland employment law firm.

McAllen appeared to have made the comment in response to another social media post criticizing the Trump administration's decision to criminally prosecute migrants for crossing the border without prior authorization, according to screenshots of the post shared on social media.

"I personally think they should shoot them all at the border and call it good," McAllen purportedly wrote. "It'll save us hard working AMERICAN'S (sic) billions of dollars on our taxes!! ;)"

Protected speech generally means a citizen makes a comment on a matter of public concern.

Immigration is a mat-

ter of public concern, but advocating for shooting migrants would likely not be interpreted by a judge as being protected speech, said Hunt, who has handled free speech retaliation cases in the past.

"Unfortunately, the law is a pretty sticky wicket," Hunt said. "I don't think that comment is clear cut as to whether it is or it isn't protected speech."

If the comment is deemed as protected speech and she were fired, she could have a free speech retaliation case, he said.

She could sue ODOT for economic losses, emotional distress, attorney fees and punitive damages against the supervisor who terminated her.

"I would think they wouldn't want to respond in a knee-jerk way," he said. "Was it posted during work hours? It probably was posted on personal account while at home. Arguably they shouldn't be terminating her for something she did at home."

KLAHN: Has history of unprofessional conduct

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and leave, but he did not. She broke down in tears when recounting the incident to the panel.

Panel chair Ronald Room, attorney from Bend, and public member Steve Bjerke, former Pendleton city councilor, found Klahn pushed court staff to engage in these conversations although "it was absolutely clear" there was no urgency. Klahn's client was not going to jail that day due to the 48-hour rule, which allows defendants to delay sentencing after changing their plea. Klahn thus had plenty of time to consult a medical expert about breastfeeding.

"The primary problem here is that (Klahn) does not know boundaries," they opined.

But the third panelist, Ron-

ald Atwood, Portland attorney, dissented on the breastfeeding matter, stating, "I do not find it improper, as a matter of law, for (Klahn) to talk to the clerk, even about breastfeeding. I do not find it

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— Steve Bjerke,

Lawyer and former Pendleton city councilor

an improper act."

Nor, he continued, did he find the incident to have a "substantial impact on the administration of justice."

All three panelists agreed Klahn violated rules when he told courtroom staff and observers he wanted to try this line in his closing argument in the case: "Are you

happy to see me or is that a gun in your pocket?"

According to the panel opinion, the women testified it was inappropriate, unprofessional and offensive.

The panel on Sept. 11 rec-

ommended Klahn serve a 75-day suspension, but more complaints emerged about his behavior while that disciplinary case was occurring. Starting in 2015, Klahn answered his cellphone during court hearings, missed proceedings and in one case failed to let a client know about a hearing. The client missed

court, and a judge issued a warrant for his arrest. Klahn also violated Bar rules of conduct when he communicated with a person who he knew already had legal representation.

Klahn admitted in the deal with the Bar to falling short of professional conduct. He agreed to serve the 75-day suspension and 45 more. He also had to complete an ethics course to practice law again. And he has until Aug. 1 to pay \$4,481 to the Bar.

Klahn said he tried to represent clients zealously, the old standard of law. But he said the Bar panel told him there is a new standard.

"The Bar seemed to be saying you're supposed to be professional," he said.

Klahn also said he understands he bothered people and made them uncomfortable, and he thinks he learned from this.