

Trump dishes dose of chaos aimed at May, Londoners

Associated Press

BLENHEIM PALACE, England (AP) — Dishing up a fresh dose of chaos on his European tour, President Donald Trump left behind a contentious NATO gathering in Brussels and moved on to Britain, where a pomp-filled welcome ceremony was soon overshadowed by an interview in which Trump blasted Prime Minister Theresa May, blamed London's mayor for terror attacks against the city and argued that Europe was "losing its culture" because of immigration.

Trump, in an interview with *The Sun* newspaper, said he felt unwelcome in London because of protests, including plans to fly a giant balloon over Parliament on Friday that depicts him as an angry baby in a diaper.

"I guess when they put out blimps to make me feel unwelcome, no reason for me to go to London," he said.

Trump, in the interview given before he left Brussels for the U.K., accused May of ruining what her country stands to gain from the Brexit vote to leave the European Union. He said her former foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, would make an "excellent" prime minister, speaking just days after Johnson resigned his position in protest over May's Brexit plans.

Trump added that May's "soft" blueprint for the U.K.'s future dealings with the EU would probably "kill" any future trade deals with the United States.

"If they do a deal like that, we would be dealing with the European Union



A helicopter leaves the grounds of the U.S. ambassador residence in Regent's Park, London, while demonstrators protest against the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump Thursday July 12, 2018.

Gareth Fuller/PA via AP

instead of dealing with the U.K., so it will probably kill the deal," Trump told the paper.

Trump, who has com-

pared his own election to the June 2016 referendum in which a majority of British voters supported leaving the EU, complained that,

"The deal she is striking is a much different deal than the one the people voted on."

He also told the tabloid that he'd shared advice with May during Britain's negotiations with the EU and she ignored it.

Details from Trump's interview with the paper became public as Trump was attending a black-tie dinner with May to welcome him to Britain with pomp and pageantry.

As for Johnson, Trump said: "I think he would be a great prime minister. I think he's got what it takes." He added, "I think he is a great representative for your country."

On Thursday night, hundreds of demonstrators chanted outside the U.S. ambassador's residence where Trump was staying on the outskirts of London,

providing a preview of the forceful protests expected on Friday.

Trump acknowledged he didn't feel welcome in the city, and blamed that in part on Mayor Sadiq Khan, who gave protesters permission to fly the 20-foot-tall balloon depicting Trump as an angry baby.

Trump also blamed recent terrorist attacks there on Khan, who is a Muslim. The president claimed Europe is "losing its culture" because of immigration from the Middle East and Africa.

"Allowing the immigration to take place in Europe is a sham," he said. "I think it changed the fabric of Europe and, unless you act very quickly, it's never going to be what it was and I don't mean that in a positive way."



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

FBI Deputy Assistant Director Peter Strzok testifies before the House Committees on the Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform during a hearing on "Oversight of FBI and DOJ Actions Surrounding the 2016 Election," on Capitol Hill.

Livid FBI agent clashes with GOP at Thursday hearing on Russia probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An embattled FBI agent whose anti-Trump text messages exposed the Justice Department to claims of institutional bias launched a vigorous defense Thursday at an extraordinary congressional hearing that devolved into shouting matches, finger pointing and veiled references to personal transgressions.

Peter Strzok testified publicly for the first time since being removed from special counsel Robert Mueller's team following the discovery of the texts last year. He said the communications with an FBI lawyer in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election reflected purely personal opinions that he never once acted on, though he did acknowledge being dismayed during the campaign by the Republican candidate's behavior.

"At no time, in any of those texts, did those personal beliefs ever enter into the realm of any action I took," Strzok told lawmakers.

In breaking his silence at a daylong hearing, Strzok came face-to-face with Republicans who angrily argued that the texts had tainted two hugely consequential FBI probes he had helped steer: inquiries into Hillary Clinton's email use and possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia.

"Agent Strzok had Hillary Clinton winning the White House before he finished investigating her," said Rep. Trey Gowdy, Republican chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. "Agent Strzok had Donald Trump impeached before he even started investigating him. That is bias."

Strzok repeatedly insisted that the texts, including one in which he called Trump a "disaster," did not reflect political bias and had never infected his work. He said the FBI's Trump investigation originated not out of personal animus but rather

from concern that Russia was seeking to meddle in the election, including what he said were credible allegations of a Russian offer of assistance to a Trump campaign associate.

He made clear his exasperation at being the focal point of a congressional hearing when Russian election interference has been "sowing discord in our nation and shaking faith in our institutions."

"I have the utmost respect for Congress's oversight role, but I truly believe that today's hearing is just another victory notch in Putin's belt and another milestone in our enemies' campaign to tear America apart," Strzok said.

The hearing underscored a little-discussed reality of law enforcement and government: agents and federal workers hold deeply held political views but are expected to keep them out of their work.

Strzok insisted that separation was possible. "What I am telling you is I and the other men and women of the FBI, every day take our personal beliefs, and set those aside in vigorous pursuit of the truth — wherever it lies, whatever it is."

To which Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, responded: "And I don't believe you."

Strzok said under aggressive questioning that a much-discussed August 2016 text in which he vowed "we'll stop" a Trump candidacy followed Trump's denigration of the family of a dead U.S. service member. He said the text, written late at night and off-the-cuff, reflected his belief that Americans would not stomach such "horrible, disgusting behavior" by the presidential candidate.

But, in a raised voice and emphatic tone, "It was in no way — unequivocally — any suggestion that me, the FBI, would take any action whatsoever to improperly impact the electoral process for any candidate. So, I take great offense, and I take great disagreement to your assertion of what that was or wasn't."

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