

Trump 'evolving' on climate action, pressured by Europeans

[FOX News](#)

TAORMINA, Italy – Forceful face-to-face talks this week with fellow world leaders left President [Donald Trump](#) “more knowledgeable” and with “evolving” views about the global climate accord he’s threatened to abandon, a top [White House](#) official said Friday. Trump also was impressed by their arguments about how crucial U.S. leadership is in supporting international efforts.

The president’s new apparent openness to staying in the landmark [Paris](#) climate pact came amid a determined pressure campaign by European leaders. During Friday’s gathering of the Group of 7 wealthy democracies – as well as at earlier stops on Trump’s first international trip – leaders have implored him to stick with the 2015 accord aimed at reducing carbon emissions and slowing potentially disastrous global warming.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the G-7 leaders “put forward very many arguments” for the U.S. sticking with the agreement. And by Friday evening, White House economic adviser Gary Cohn said Trump’s views were indeed “evolving.”

“He feels much more knowledgeable on the topic today,” Cohn said. “He came here to learn, he came here to get smarter.”

While those comments were remarkable given Trump’s fierce criticism of the Paris deal as a candidate, they were also in keeping with his emerging pattern as president. A novice in international affairs, Trump has been surprisingly candid about the impact his conversations with world leaders have had

in shaping his views on numerous issues.

He backed away from his tough campaign talk about trade with China after a summit with [President Xi](#) Jinping. And he abandoned his criticism of [Saudi Arabia's](#) human rights record following his warm welcome in the desert kingdom this week.

On Friday, G-7 leaders appeared to take a page out of the playbook other countries have followed, emphasizing America's unrivaled influence on the world stage. Cohn told reporters that Trump was struck by "how important it is for the [United States](#) to show leadership" and how even in massive international agreements, there's "a big gap when you take the biggest economy out."

White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster quickly jumped in to assert that Trump would make his decisions based "on what's best for the American people," hewing to the "America First" policy that energized the president's supporters during last year's election campaign.

Nearly 200 countries are part of the Paris accord, and each sets its own emissions targets, which are not legally binding. The U.S. has pledged to reduce its annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels, which would be a reduction of about 1.6 billion tons of annual emissions.

The Trump administration has argued that the U.S. standards are tougher than those set by China, India and others, and therefore have put American businesses at a disadvantage.

After more than a week abroad, Trump will close his international trip Saturday with additional G-7 meetings and an address to U.S. troops at a nearby air base. Unlike many of the leaders, he does not plan a news conference, meaning he'll end his trip without a formal question-and-answer session with journalists that could have included queries about the investigation back home into contacts between Russia and his

election campaign.

The G-7 marked Trump's final stop on a grueling nine-day trip through the [Middle East](#) and Europe. While the president was warmly received in Saudi Arabia and Israel, his reception in Europe was been more tepid given his campaign criticisms of NATO and the [European Union](#), the continent's most powerful institutions.

In Brussels on Thursday, Trump excoriated fellow NATO leaders whose countries don't meet the military alliance's financial goals. The president also raised eyebrows with his comment in a private meeting that Germans are "bad" for having a large trade surplus with the U.S.

The gap between Trump and other G-7 leaders on climate underscored his isolation from Europe on some major issues. The other G-7 nations – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and Japan – were weighing whether to issue a statement at the close of the summit reiterating their support for the Paris accord, even if the United States was not included.

The White House's slow decision-making on the issue led to the European leaders' persuasion campaign. Multiple White House meetings on the matter were delayed in recent weeks, and Trump advisers ultimately said he would not make a decision until after he returns to Washington this weekend.

In fact, discussions over the climate deal have sown divisions within the White House, splitting the nationalists and the globalists – including Cohn – who are competing for influence within Trump's administration. One potential compromise that's emerged involves staying in the climate accord but adjusting the U.S. emissions targets.

Even before arriving in the picturesque Sicilian coastal town of Taormina for the G-7 summit, Trump was facing pressure on Paris during his trip.

[French President](#) Emmanuel Macron spoke with him at length about the climate deal during a meeting Thursday in Brussels. The Vatican secretary of state, Pietro Parolin, made his own pro-Paris pitch to Trump and his advisers.

Pope Francis, who has framed climate change as an urgent moral crisis and blamed global warming on an unfair, fossil fuel-based industrial model that harms the poor, also appeared to be sending a message to Trump during their meeting. Among the three documents the pope presented as a gift was his 2015 encyclical on the need to protect the environment.