

Will Trump take a club to the G7 club again?



Biarritz is known for big Atlantic waves, but the loudest crashing at next weekend's G7 meeting in the French resort could be the sound of US President Donald Trump and his convention-wrecking diplomacy.

Annual Group of Seven summits -- bringing together the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States -- were always the coziest of clubs for US presidents. Until Trump.

At the G7 in Quebec last year he exploded the typically stage-managed proceedings and left in a fury, engaging in personal insults over trade with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and refusing to sign the collective final statement.

G7 leaders better buckle up again, warns Robert Guttman, director of the Center for Politics & Foreign Relations at Johns Hopkins University.

"He's going to be a bull in a china shop," Guttman said.

The French hosts hope they can better manage Trump this time. In particular, a French diplomat told reporters, the traditional importance of the final communique will be deemphasized, as that's "one way to avoid the situation we had in Canada last year."

- Is America 'winning?' -Biarritz is known for big Atlantic waves, but the loudest crashing at next weekend's G7 meeting in the French resort could be the sound of US President Donald Trump and his convention-wrecking diplomacy.

But French President Emmanuel Macron wants the G7 to talk about tackling global inequality.

That's a topic ill-suited to Trump's fiercely America-centric -- critics say isolationist -- worldview ahead of elections next year.

As Trump likes to tell rallies amid chants of "USA, USA," the only metric he cares about on the world stage is whether America is "winning."

Nowhere is this clearer than on climate change -- a major factor, according to France, in driving economic and social inequality.

Trump pulled the United States out of the 2015 Paris climate accord on reducing carbon emissions and he remains proudly defiant over what allies saw as his abandonment of an attempt, literally, to save the world.

"It was good for others. It wasn't for us," he told a crowd at a new petrochemical factory just last week.

The working class audience -- exactly the type of voters Trump hopes will deliver him a second term -- cheered.

And in Biarritz, that base will still be his audience.

"Trump comes not as a statesman, but as a politician fighting very hard for reelection," Guttman said.

James Roberts, at the conservative Heritage Foundation, says Trump is merely correcting what Republicans consider to have been the foreign policy drift under his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama.

US President Donald Trump was all smiles with Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and France's President Emmanuel Macron at a June meeting in Japan

Trump will push back on France's digital tax, imposed to plug what Macron's government says is a massive loophole in which US companies like Google operate abroad while paying almost nothing.

Branding this "foolishness," Trump has threatened to retaliate with tariffs on French wine imports.

(Taken from the AFP)

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