

## Obama

## Trade Quest Goes Global

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

ELMAU, Germany — President Barack Obama's politically fraught trade quest in Washington trailed him across the Atlantic Sunday, as he met with world leaders anxiously watching a debate on Capitol Hill that could impact the status of economic pacts with the Asia-Pacific and Europe.

The leaders spent more than an hour privately discussing trade issues as they opened a two-day meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations. The talks in the majestic Bavarian Alps coincided with the delicate debate in Washington over giving Obama the authority to move trade agreements through Congress more quickly.

In addition to the summit events at Schloss Elmau, a one-time artist retreat turned luxury spa, Obama met privately with British Prime Minister David Cameron and joined German Chancellor Angela Merkel for beer and sausages in a nearby town.

Obama and his advisers voiced



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confidence in the trade push, but the effort faces a deeply uncertain future. The president's own Democratic Party is largely opposed to legislation that allows Congress to reject or approve, but not change, trade deals negotiated by the administration. In an unusual political

role reversal, the president's reservoir of support has come from his Republican opponents.

If Obama succeeds, it would boost the prospects for Congress eventually ratifying the Trans-Pacific Partnership pact, a 12-nation consortium that includes G-7 partners Japan and Canada. The other G-7 nations — Britain, France, Germany, and Italy — have a stake in a U.S.-European Union trade deal that is on a slower course.

Richard Fontaine, president of the Center for New American Security, said that a failure to grant Obama the negotiating authority could affect his trade agen-

da. Fontaine said other nations probably would view U.S. lawmakers' decisions as "a proxy for American engagement in the world."

While the Senate already has sided with Obama, the House is another matter. Just 18 Democrats have expressed support publicly, and that is short of what the White House is believed to need in order to supplement affirmative GOP votes.

Four of those lawmakers traveled with Obama to Germany: Reps. Gerry Connolly of Virginia, Jim Himes of Connecticut, Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas and Mike Quigley of Illinois. Their invitation appeared aimed both at rewarding lawmakers backing one of Obama's priorities and showing G-7 leaders that he is getting some Democrats to join the effort.

Democrats are under intense pressure from labor unions, liberal organizations and others opposed to the Asia-Pacific pact because they believe it would hurt U.S. workers and weaken environmental standards. Anti-free trade demonstrators were among the groups protesting near the summit site.

## Picture This



JEREMY HOECK/P&amp;D

These archers and coaches take photos of Sunday's World Archery Youth Championships opening ceremony in Yankton. Competitors and coaches from more than 50 nations have come to Yankton to compete in these global championships. Follow the action on [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net) or on Twitter at #WAYC2015.

## Decision 2016

## Christie Is Betting On Town Halls

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — If Chris Christie runs for president, there's little doubt people will see plenty of the town halls the New Jersey governor is known for. That anything-goes format is his comfort zone, and voters tend to like it.

Christie spent hours answering questions at two town hall-style events during the past week in South Carolina — one planned, the other an impromptu session in the back room of a bar. He'll be doing the same in Iowa in the days ahead.

These get-togethers "are something that I've been doing for a long time in New Jersey," Christie told the crowd at Tommy's Country Ham House in Greenville.

To be precise, he's done 138 such events, most in New Jersey. He said he will do many more.

Christie's aptitude for answering questions on the fly pleases his audiences and fits well in states such as New Hampshire where voters expect close-up interaction, repeatedly, from presidential candidates. But that tradition

is less robust in South Carolina and elsewhere, where advertising and organization count for more.

Christie says he will decide this month whether to run for the 2016 Republican nomination.

"Just walking into a space and holding a town hall is not something we typically have," said Leighton Lord, a college friend of Christie who lives in South Carolina and has been acting as his liaison. "He's much, much more likable when people see him in person than the way he's portrayed nationally."

Gloria Roberts, among the more than 200 people at the ham house, called Christie "extremely impressive and I believe he does what he says."

Roberts, 69, a retired software company who lives in nearby Piedmont, said she was "totally going in another direction" before she heard Christie. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz had topped her list of 2016 favorites.

Ninety minutes later, that had changed.

Christie "makes you feel like you can believe in the government," she said. "He makes you feel strong and safe."

## Abortions Declining In Nearly All States

NEW YORK (AP) — Abortions have declined in states where new laws make it harder to have them — but they've also waned in states where abortion rights are protected, an Associated Press survey finds. Nearly everywhere, in red states and blue, abortions are down since 2010.

Explanations vary. Abortion-rights advocates attribute it to expanded access to effective contraceptives and a drop in unintended pregnancies. Some foes of abortion say there has been a shift in societal attitudes, with more women choosing to carry their pregnancies to term.

Several of the states that have been most aggressive in passing anti-abortion laws — including Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, and Oklahoma — have seen their abortion numbers drop by more than 15 percent since 2010. But more liberal states such as New York, Washington and Oregon also had declines of that magnitude, even as they maintained unrestricted access to abortion.

Nationwide, the AP survey showed a decrease in abortions of about 12 percent since 2010.

One major factor has been a decline in the teen pregnancy rate, which in 2010 reached its lowest level in decades. There's been no official update since then, but the teen birth rate has continued to drop, which experts say signals a similar trend for teen pregnancies.

## Reward Posted For Escaped Murderers

DANNEMORA, N.Y. (AP) — Two murderers who used power tools to escape from prison must have taken days to cut through steel walls and pipes and break through the bricks, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Sunday as a \$100,000 reward was posted for information leading to their capture.

Authorities were investigating how the inmates obtained the power tools they used in the "Shawshank Redemption"-style breakout over the weekend.

"It was a sophisticated plan," Cuomo said. "It took a period of time, no doubt, to execute."

David Sweat, 34, was serving a sentence of life without parole for the 2002 killing of a sheriff's deputy. Richard Matt, 48, had been sentenced to 25 years to life for kidnapping, killing and dismembering his former boss in 1997.

"These are killers. They are murderers," the governor said. "There's never been a question about the crimes they committed. They are now on the loose, and our first order of business is apprehending them."

## Turkish Ruling Party May Lose Majority

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — In a stunning rebuke of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ambitions to expand his powers, Turkish voters stripped his party of its simple majority in parliament, preliminary election results showed Sunday.

With 99.9 percent of the vote counted, Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party, the AKP, had the support of around 41 percent of voters, state-run TRT television said. According to projections, that would give it some 258 seats — 18 below the minimum needed to keep its majority.

The unexpected setback for AKP likely puts an end, for the time being, to Erdogan's hopes of passing constitutional changes that would have greatly boosted the powers of his office. Instead, he faces struggles to retain his pre-eminent place in Turkish politics without the obvious levers to steer the government through his party in parliament.

The result is also a bitter blow to Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, whose political prospects are uncertain after leading his party to such a disappointing result. AKP will now have to seek a coalition partner to stay in power, with the nationalist MHP the most likely candidate.

Late Sunday, Davutoglu declared victory in the election, but didn't acknowledge his party had lost its majority.

## G-7 Leader United On Russia Sanctions

ELMAU, Germany (AP) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday she expects a meeting of the Group of Seven industrialized democracies to produce a "united signal" that sanctions against Russia can only be softened if a February peace accord for Ukraine is fully implemented.

Even before the issue was brought to the table, most of the leaders had already expressed their support for the idea.

This year's meeting of the leading industrialized democracies was the second in a row without Russia, which was ejected from what was the G-8 last year over its actions in Ukraine. Even with President Vladimir Putin absent, Russia was prominent in the leaders' minds as they gathered in the Bavarian Alps.

Merkel and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed during a pre-summit bilateral meeting that the duration of sanctions imposed upon Moscow should be "clearly linked to Russia's full implementation of the Minsk" peace accord agreed in February, the White House said in a statement. Merkel and French President Francois Hollande, another summit participant, were central to drawing up that accord.

## In Sorrow, Obama-Biden Put Personal Bond On Public Display

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Few relationships in Washington are as complex as that of president and vice president, a partnership forged of political necessity and often defined by rivalry and competing self-interests.

For President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, there have been trying moments since they took office more than six years ago.

But the recent death of Biden's son, Beau, has magnified a striking personal bond between Obama and Joe Biden, men from different generations and backgrounds.

"Joe, you are my brother," Obama said in a deeply personal eulogy at the younger Biden's funeral Saturday in Delaware. "I'm grateful every day that you've got such a big heart, and a big soul, and those broad shoulders."

Obama's voice cracked throughout his remarks, a rare public display of emotion for a president with a typically cool demeanor. Biden, on the other hand, can overflow with emotion at even mundane White House events.

The 53-year-old Obama and his 72-year-old vice president overlapped for a few years in the Senate, but they were not particularly close. After winning the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008, Obama picked Biden as his running mate in part because he hoped the Delaware senator's 36 years in Washington would offset his own inexperience.

Once in the White House, Obama showed his confidence in Biden by putting him

in charge of meaty issues, including Iraq policy and the economic stimulus. Biden also would become the point person on Ukraine and gun control.

As the White House and Congress barreled toward a tax increase deadline in the closing days of 2012, it was Biden who called on his deep Capitol Hill relationships to avert a crisis, filling the void for a president who has struggled with the kind of personal touch that appears to come so easily for the vice president.

But Biden's free-wheeling style has caused headaches for the White House, most notably when he appeared to force the president's hand on gay marriage in the months before the 2012 election. Biden said in a television interview that he was "absolutely comfortable" with gay couples marrying. At the time, Obama professed to still be "evolving" on the issue.

Obama's political advisers were frustrated that Biden had pushed the president to weigh in on an issue they had planned to avoid until after the election. But Obama himself appeared far less exercised by his vice president's misstep.

"I think (Obama) understood before a lot of people that all of the value you get from having Joe Biden on your team, it just overwhelms a minor hiccup if he says something impolitic," said Jay Carney, who worked for both Obama and Biden in the White House before leaving the administration last year.

The closing years of an administration can be trying for relations between the president and vice president,

particularly if the second-in-command is running for the top job. Even the ties between President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, who were seen as close during most of their two terms in office, grew distant as Gore tried to separate himself from Clinton as he ran for president in 2000.

Biden hasn't officially ruled out a presidential run in 2016, though there are few signs he is moving in that direction.

More than Biden's political or policy skill, aides say it's the vice president's closeness with his family that appeals to Obama. While Biden's family is large and close-knit, Obama barely knew his father and was raised by his grandparents and single mother.

"I think the president is just really drawn to the emotional power of the Biden family — the intensity of the commitment the vice president has to his family and they have to him," Carney said.

Biden largely kept his son's health struggles private, but White House officials say Obama and the vice president had several conversations in recent weeks about Beau Biden's recurrence of cancer.

When Obama addressed the large crowd packed into a Roman Catholic church in Wilmington, it was clear he was speaking not as a political ally but as someone suffering alongside the Biden family.

After sharing a long embrace with Biden, Obama said of his own family, "We've become part of the Biden clan."

"The Biden family rule applies," he continued. "We're always here for you, we always will be — my word as a Biden."

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