

Art of the Deal: How President Trump Forced Mexico and Canada to the Negotiating Table

Thursday morning, President Donald Trump tweeted that he had a discussion with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

He wrote:

I received calls from the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada asking to renegotiate NAFTA rather than terminate. I agreed subject to the fact that if we do not reach a fair deal for all, we will then terminate NAFTA. Relationships are good-deal very possible!

The call the president was speaking of apparently took place Wednesday afternoon. The White House, a short time after his tweet, provided the following readout of those conversations, although it doesn't provide much more detail:

Late this afternoon, President Donald J. Trump spoke with both President Peña Nieto of Mexico and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada. Both conversations were pleasant and productive. President Trump agreed not to terminate NAFTA at this time, and the leaders agreed to proceed swiftly, according to their required internal procedures, to enable the renegotiation of the NAFTA deal to the benefit of all three countries. President Trump said, "It is my privilege to bring NAFTA up to date through renegotiation. It is an honor to deal with both President Peña Nieto and Prime Minister Trudeau, and I believe that the end result will make all three countries stronger and better."

Politico, however, is reporting the rest of the story. And once you hear it, you'll realize the president had a plan all along:

A draft order has been submitted for final stages of review and could be unveiled late this week or early next, two White House officials told POLITICO. The effort, which still could change in coming days as more officials weigh in, would indicate the administration's intent to withdraw from the sweeping Clinton-era pact by triggering the timeline set forth in the deal.

The approach appears designed to extract better terms from Canada and Mexico. But it raises the possibility the Trump administration could walk away from one of the largest trade deals on the planet after having already pulled the U.S. out of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation deal that the Obama administration saw as a way to cement American influence over Asia-Pacific trade.

The article also squashes the narrative that somehow chief strategist Steve Bannon is on his way out at the Trump White House. It states the former Breitbart News chairman, who the liberal mainstream media treats as an "alt-right" political pariah, carefully crafted the executive order with National Trade Council Director Peter Navarro.

The report is also quick to point out a number of Republicans are opposed to withdrawing from NAFTA. But, it also notes that what the president is doing is entirely consistent with pledges he made on the campaign trail.

[Click here to read the entire report.](#) {eo}