

Trump postpones G7 meeting, seeks expansion of members

Written by Administrator
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ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (Net) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he will postpone until the fall a meeting of Group of 7 nations he had planned to hold next month at the White House despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. And he said he plans to invite Russia, Australia, South Korea and India as he again advocated for the group's expansion.

Trump told reporters on Air Force One as he returned to Washington from Florida that he feels the current makeup of the group is "very outdated" and doesn't properly represent "what's going on in the world."

He said he had not yet set a new date for the meeting, but thought the gathering could take place in September, around the time of the annual meeting of the United Nations in New York, or perhaps after the U.S. election in November.

Alyssa Farah, White House director of strategic communications, said that Trump wanted to bring in some of the country's traditional allies and those impacted by the coronavirus to discuss the future of China.

The surprise announcement came after German Chancellor Angela Merkel's office said Saturday that she would not attend the meeting unless the course of the coronavirus spread had changed by then.

The leaders of the world's major economies were slated to meet in June in the U.S. at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland, but the coronavirus outbreak hobbled those plans. Trump announced in March he was canceling the summit because of the pandemic and that the leaders would confer by video conference instead. But Trump then switched course, saying a week ago that he was again planning to host an in-person meeting.

"Now that our Country is 'Transitioning back to Greatness', I am considering rescheduling the G-7, on the same or similar date, in Washington, D.C., at the legendary Camp David," Trump tweeted. "The other members are also beginning their COMEBACK. It would be a great sign to all - normalization!"

The G7 members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The group's presidency rotates annually among member countries.

Trump has repeatedly advocated for expanding the group to include Russia, prompting opposition from some members, including Canada's Justin Trudeau, who told reporters he had privately aired his objection to Russian readmittance.

"Russia has yet to change the behavior that led to its expulsion in 2014, and therefore should not be allowed back into the G7," he said at a news conference.

The House also passed a bipartisan resolution in December 2019 that supports Russia's previous expulsion from the annual gathering.

Russia had been invited to attend the gathering of the world's most advanced economies since 1997, but was suspended in 2014 following its invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.