

Trump says his Florida resort won't be used for G-7 summit



Washington, October 21 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has abruptly reversed course and announced next year's G-7 economic summit of world powers would not be held at Trump National in Doral, Florida. Observers said it was a rare reversal after facing heavy bipartisan criticism.

Trump tweeted the major change just over 48 hours after the initial announcement: "We will no longer consider Trump National Doral, Miami, as the Host Site for the G-7 in 2020. We will begin the search for another site, including the possibility of Camp David, immediately."

The President called the rising criticism his administration was facing "Irrational Hostility," and wrote: "I thought I was doing something very good for our Country by using Trump National Doral, in Miami, for hosting the G-7 Leaders."

The White House had been defending its decision to use Trump's own property as the site for the G7 in the face of mounting outrage and disapproval. White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham told reporters on Saturday that the Doral site would be "significantly cheaper" than other options.

The administration had argued the event would be run "at cost," or without profit, by the Trump National property because of the emoluments clause of the Constitution, which largely prohibits the President from accepting gifts and money from foreign governments.

But it is not clear that simply avoiding a profit would keep the administration from running afoul of the emoluments clause. The administration also had not clarified the details of how it would determine what "at cost" would be.

Trump was receiving an unprecedented hail of criticism for the initial move. Noah Bookbinder, the executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, said: "President Trump's decision to award the G-7 Conference to his own property was outrageous, corrupt and a constitutional violation. It was stunningly corrupt even for a stunningly corrupt administration," Bookbinder said in a statement. "His reversal of that decision is a bow to reality, but does not change how astonishing it was that a president ever thought this was appropriate, or that it was something he could get away with."

At a Thursday press briefing, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney defiantly addressed the concern that hosting the G-7 on Trump's property already creates profit by highlighting the resort, asking reporters to "consider the possibility that Donald Trump's brand is already strong enough on its own."

Mulvaney told reporters it was Trump who brought up the idea of hosting the G-7 at Doral, explaining: "We sat around one night. We were back in the dining room and I was going over it with a couple of our advance team. We had the list, and he goes: 'What about Doral?' And it was like, 'That's not the craziest idea. It makes perfect sense.'"

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