
BRITAIN DEFENDS TRUMP VISIT DESPITE PROTESTS

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Thousands descended on Londons Parliament Square on Monday evening to protest the governments plans to give US President Donald Trump a lavish state visit this year.

The demonstrators gathered just as MPs debated a petition signed by 1.85 million people saying a formal state visit would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen. An opposing petition has drawn just 300,000 signatures.

There is no way that this honour should be awarded to someone who has abused women, who has abused members of the Muslim faith, who has abused migrants, said Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell.

Prime Minister Teresa May has said she will not consider canceling the visit. Her government hopes to strengthen its ties with the US and secure a trade deal, just as it negotiates Britains divorce from the EU.

In the light of Americas absolutely pivotal role we believe it entirely right that we should use all the tools at our disposal to build common ground with President Trump, junior foreign minister Alan Duncan told parliament.

He described state visits as Britains most important diplomatic tool, and said Trumps trip would go ahead as planned.

Trump-bashing fest

The three-hour debate was purely symbolic – it did not have the power to stop the state visit.

It was more a chance for lawmakers to air their views on Trump.

Labour Party MP Paul Flynn opened the discussion by pointing out that only two other US presidents □ George W. Bush and Barack Obama □ have been invited for state visits since the 1950s.

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas said many citizens had raised not only Trumps misogyny and racism, but also his contempt for basic climate science.

Conservative member of parliament Julian Lewis countered that taking Trump by the hand and bringing him on side was preferable to encouraging him to retreat into some sort of bunker.

The relationship, the special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States of America goes beyond any individual that might happen to occupy the White House at any particular time, said Conservative MP Mark Pritchard.

State visits are distinct from official visits, and see foreign leaders welcomed with royal pomp and military ceremony. Most stay at Buckingham Palace as guests of Queen Elizabeth II.

Kaynak/Source: