
EMBATTLED MAY FACES FURTHER BREXIT THREATS, AFTER TRUMP URGED HER TO SUE EU

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Theresa May faces further threats to her governments Brexit strategy and could have to stave off the prospect of a no confidence challenge to her leadership this week, after revealing that Donald Trump had advised her to sue the EU.

On Sunday (15 July), May fronted up to the media, after a volatile visit from US President Donald Trump at the end of last week, in which Trump appeared to openly undermine her negotiating stance and praise former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, who resigned last Monday, as a future Prime Minister.

In an interview with the BBC, May said that Trump had urged her to sue the EU, not go into negotiations with them, sue them.

May also defended her Brexit White Paper published last week which suggested that the UK was ready to sign up to a common rulebook for food and goods after Brexit, effectively calling for a single market on goods.

This week, the last before the UK Parliament breaks for its summer recess, the government will face votes on a series of amendments to its taxation (cross border trade) bill, one of a package of bills that adjust the UKs legal framework for its post-Brexit future. The 60-member European Research Group, a eurosceptic caucus of Mays party which supports a hard Brexit, intends to back an amendment which would make it illegal for the UKs tax authorities to collect duties for the EU without reciprocal arrangements.

Mrs May will have to fend off those amendments, and a possible attempt by Labour and Conservative Remainer MPs to tack on demands that the UK stay in the EUs customs union into the bill.

Reports over the weekend suggested that 40 of the 48 MPs needed had lodged no-confidence letters with the chairman of the partys backbench 1922 Committee.

May continues to insist that she will fight any no confidence move, which would require her to retain the support of at least half of the Tory partys 316 MPs. If she was successful, another no-confidence vote could not be held for 12 months.

Tory MPs have until Wednesday to trigger a no confidence vote this summer.

In Brussels, meanwhile, European Commission chief negotiator Michel Barnier will hold the first formal discussions on the UK's White Paper with EU ministers on Friday.

The White Paper, which calls for a post-Brexit relationship with the EU that would be similar to the EU's Association Agreement with Ukraine, received a cautious welcome by Barnier and the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group chaired by Guy Verhofstadt.

Kaynak/Source: