

UK's Theresa May: Trump 'told me I should sue the EU' over Brexit

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President Donald Trump thinks Britain should sue the European Union to improve leverage in the strained negotiations over Britain's exit from the economic bloc, British Prime Minister Theresa May said Sunday.

Trump said at a news conference Friday that he had given May advice that she found too "brutal" to accept. Sunday, May explained the advice on BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

"He told me I should sue the EU – sue the EU, not go into negotiations," she said.

She said her nation was determined to continue negotiations aimed at an amicable split that would allow for some ties to remain.

"What the president also said was 'Don't walk away,' " she said. "'Don't walk away from negotiations because then you are stuck.'"

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Trump's visit to the United Kingdom has been awash in controversy. The visit prompted anti-Trump rallies, and the president stunned the populace with bruising criticism directed at May published in a British newspaper.

In an interview published by The Sun, Trump said May's plan for the Brexit was counter to what "Leave" supporters approved in a referendum in 2016. He said May's efforts to retain close ties to the EU would probably "kill" a trade deal with the United States.

He lauded Boris Johnson, a Brexit policy leader who quit as foreign secretary last week over May's inclination not to make a sharp break from the EU. Trump said Johnson would make a strong prime minister.

Trump downplayed the comments at a news conference, describing the story as "fake news" and saying he had a recording of the interview to prove it.

"I didn't criticize the prime minister," Trump said. "I have a lot of respect for the prime minister. Unfortunately, there was a story that was done, which was generally fine, but it didn't put in what I said about the prime minister, and I said tremendous things."

Trump called May "a very tough, very smart, very capable person," adding that he would "much rather have her as my friend than my enemy."

Trump's U.K. trip is part of a seven-day European tour intended to shore up alliances before Trump meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on Monday.

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