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To Our Clients and Friends,

***First Kim Now Putin: Trump's Contentious Personal Diplomacy Strategy***

Last week, President Trump met with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un at a summit in Singapore — a meeting of two global leaders that has been elusive to American Presidents for decades. The two walked out of the improbable meeting sharing a goal of denuclearization and reduced tensions, publicly playfully joking and shaking hands with each other. The build up to the meeting and the subsequent reaction has been met with some praise from conservative leaders and pundits, but mostly criticism and fear. Opponents to the President saw the meeting as achieving little progress in America's foreign relations with North Korea, pointing out that in some ways this was a victory for North Korea as it holds them accountable for very little. Trump's language and actions even served to legitimize one of the most notorious violators of human rights. Many political pundits have pointed out that similar vague promises made by Kim have been violated multiple times before. However, the media perspective has never slowed Trump's agenda in the past, only acting to motivate him further in his quest to strengthen America's global position, while bringing peace in the process. Trump moves to his convictions, beholden to few political elites, highlighted by Republican leaders and his own administration, whom he has ignored or rejected on several occasions. This type of decision-making and stubbornness contributed to his political ascendancy and support, driving often impulsive choices that endlessly infuriate leaders, media, and the public from both sides of the aisle.

The controversial instinctual nature of Trump's diplomacy doesn't appear to be slowing any time soon, as shortly after his meeting with Kim, his administration announced his intentions to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Trump administration has been in negotiations with the Kremlin for weeks, with a senior official saying, "There's no stopping him. He's going to do it. He wants to have a meeting with Putin, so he's going to have a meeting with Putin." On Capitol Hill, political leaders from

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both sides fear such a meeting only ruins Trump and America's credibility and global position, while simultaneously escalating the allegations into Trump's collusion with the Russian Government. Trump has repeatedly emphasized these accusations as being a "witch hunt", however, the mainstream media has continually stressed the significance and illegality. Democrats, already against Trump at all costs, see Putin as capable of controlling Trump and possibly threatening America's safety and security. Many Republicans fear the same costs of Trump's recently developed benevolent diplomacy strategy, desiring a more hawkish strategy of intervention. However, Trump has rejected the status quo nearly every day from his campaign to his presidency, and will stubbornly push forward to achieve his vision, regardless of how it may have been accomplished in the past. He has caused a reformation of his political party, forcing Republican leaders to agree with him, or else they will fail to gain support from citizens in primaries for reelection.

The instinctual and impulsive diplomacy strategy dominating Trump's foreign relations and decision-making follows the blueprint that has brought Trump political success, as well as domestic economic success much to the chagrin of his opponents. The next step is in defining Trump's foreign relations legacy. As he has continually done over the last three years, there is no guessing where Trump will go next, or what grand vision he has for America. But there is one guarantee: Trump will stubbornly work to achieve what he defines as best for America, regardless of his detractors and the status quo.

Sincerely yours,

Brian M. Babyak  
Summer Research Intern