

‘She’s lost it’: Trump claims Nancy Pelosi is mentally incapable of understanding new NAFTA

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U.S. President Donald Trump baselessly questioned the mental soundness of the Democrat who leads the House of Representatives, alleging Thursday with no apparent evidence that Speaker Nancy Pelosi has suffered an intellectual decline that has left her unable to comprehend his revised NAFTA deal with Canada and Mexico.

Trump said that Pelosi is “disintegrating,” is “crazy,” is a “mess,” and “doesn’t understand” the trade agreement.

“I don’t think she’s capable right now of understanding it. I think she’s got a lot of problems,” he said.

“I’ll tell you what, I’ve been watching her, and I have been watching her for a long period of time, she’s not the same person. She’s lost it.”

Pelosi has not aggressively opposed the agreement, which retains almost all of the key provisions of the original NAFTA. She has said she would like to work with the administration to resolve Democrats’ concerns about provisions related to labour, the environment and pharmaceuticals.

Trump has himself faced accusations of mental unfitness, including from Pelosi. He has shown a fondness for hurling at his opponents the same insults he has received.

His Thursday accusations were part of a two-day war of words that underscored how difficult it may be for the administration to secure approval for the agreement in the House, which is effectively controlled by Pelosi.

The week began with trade optimism. Trump lifted his tariffs on Canadian and Mexican steel and aluminum, and Pelosi agreed to designate Democratic lawmakers to work with the White House to address Democrats’ complaints.

But Trump walked out of a Wednesday meeting with Pelosi on the subject of infrastructure, angry that she had accused him earlier in the day of perpetrating a “cover-up.” He then delivered an unscheduled Rose Garden speech in which he said he would refuse to work with Democrats on legislation while they were investigating him.

Pelosi responded by claiming the president had thrown a “temper tantrum.” She also called for an “intervention,” and she made a vague reference to the constitutional amendment that allows a president to be removed from office if he is unable to discharge his duties.

Trump lashed back with a series of insults at a Thursday event supposedly about farmers and ranchers, during which he also uttered a series of false claims, inaccurately accused former FBI

officials of treason, and indignantly called on three of his aides to tell the cameras how calm he supposedly was before he walked out on Pelosi.

“I’m an extremely stable genius,” he said a little later in the event.

Pelosi responded on Twitter.

“When the ‘extremely stable genius’ starts acting more presidential, I’ll be happy to work with him on infrastructure, trade and other issues,” she said.

It was unclear just how much Trump’s fury would affect the negotiations with Democrats over the deal he calls the USMCA. With Canada, North Korea and others, Trump has previously shown a willingness to let his underlings conduct cordial behind-the-scenes negotiations with people he is publicly attacking.

“U.S. political leaders are engaging in a war of words right now, but hopefully the technical experts working behind the scenes can make the changes necessary to the USMCA to bring both sides together. The leaders may not like each other very much at this point, but that doesn’t have to prevent a compromise,” said Simon Lester, associate director of trade policy at the libertarian Cato Institute.

Earlier in the week, senior House Democrat Steny Hoyer told reporters, “The administration wants to get to yes, we would like to get to yes.” Some of the more left-leaning Democrats in the caucus have been more strongly opposed.