

Meditation overload: Historical texts reveal its potential downsides

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FEELING BLEU

U.S., Canadian cheesemakers caught in Trump's tariff dispute

Michael Collins USA TODAY

GREENSBORO, VT – On Mateo Kehler's family farm, at the end of a dirt road about an hour from the Canadian border, the cheesemaking starts before darkness lifts over the pastures and pines of northern Vermont. • A truck with fresh milk from cows that graze in nearby fields rumbles toward Jasper Hill Farm's big blue barn, painted with a mural of a starry nighttime sky and a blue-cheese moon. An American flag stretches over the entrance. • Two hours to the north, in a small, leafy, French-speaking village, Jean Morin steps into the former Catholic church he bought for 1 Canadian dollar and turned into part of his cheese factory. The pungent smell of aging cheese fills a temperature-controlled room as Morin surveys shelves holding hundreds of wheels of the fromage he produces at the old rectory next door. • Kehler's and Morin's cheesemaking businesses sit on opposite sides of the United States-Canada border. But both are feeling the same pain of the tariff war between the United States and Canada.

"The reality is that there's nobody that is winning," Kehler said. "Everyone in these border communities is losing."

Kehler, who co-founded Jasper Hill Farm with his brother Andy, worked for a decade to penetrate Canada's highly regulated dairy market to sell his artisan cheeses north of the border. He had finally made inroads and was looking to expand when President Donald Trump slapped tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Canadian products, including cheese.

Canada retaliated by placing tariffs on U.S.-made cheese as well as hundreds of other American goods. Trump inflamed the tensions with a barrage of insults and suggestions that Canada become the 51st state.

All of a sudden, Kehler said, Canadians were no longer interested in buying American-made cheese.

"The inflammatory rhetoric and the backlash absolutely killed our (Canadian) market overnight," he said. "And it hasn't recovered."

In Quebec, Morin and his neighbors in Sainte-Élizabeth-de-Warwick, halfway between Montreal and Quebec City, felt the sting of Trump's tariffs and taunts. Trump's outbursts and punitive measures forced Morin into a difficult decision. He stopped exporting the cheeses he produces at Fromagerie du Presbytère to the United States. The tariffs, he said, made it too expensive.



ABOVE: Vermont's Jasper Hill Farm was purchased by brothers Mateo and Andy Kehler in 1998. TOP: Due to the tariff war between the United States and Canada, Jean Morin, founder of the Fromagerie du Presbytere in Quebec, has halted sales across the border. PHOTOS BY JASPER COLT/USA TODAY

"I'm closer to Vermont than Vancouver, Toronto," Morin said. But right now, he said, the border separating the two countries feels like "a big wall in China."

For cheesemakers on both sides, "it's a terrible moment," he said.

A passion for cheesemaking

Morin, a fourth-generation dairy farmer, grew up in a small house across the street from the church he turned into part of his cheese production center.

See CHEESE, Page 3A

ANALYSIS

GOP split on Miller's ascension

Some think immigration policy has gone too far

Greg Bovino has been waiting nine months for this.

As Border Patrol commander, he became the swaggering face of President Donald Trump's street-level immigration sweeps, leading agents through Los Angeles, Chicago and, finally, Minneapolis, where the killing of two U.S. citizens by federal officers in January sparked national outcry, set off a political storm and ended his time in the field. He retired in March, convinced that the administration had lost its nerve.

So when Trump announced Nov. 6 that Stephen Miller, formerly the White House's deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security adviser, would become his new chief of staff, Bovino saw a correction – and vindication.

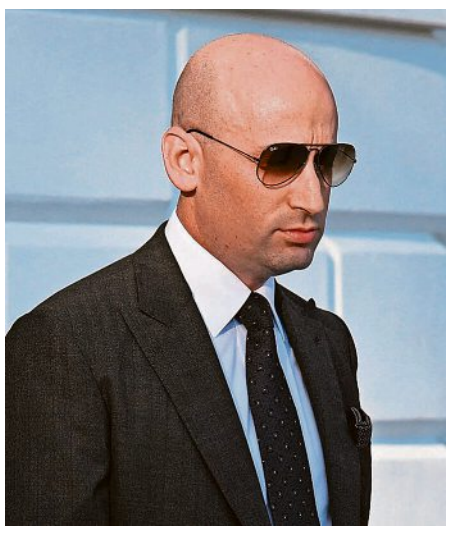
"I think President Trump finally realizes he got duped, and he brought in the individual who was actually telling him the truth the whole time," Bovino said in an interview with USA TODAY.

Not all politicians in Washington share that view. Miller's promotion came three days after an election in which Democrats won control of both chambers of Congress, and in which nearly 6 in 10 voters told exit pollsters the administration's immigration enforcement had gone too far. Some Republican lawmakers have blamed Miller, who designed and directed much of that enforcement, for turning what had been one of the party's strongest issues into a liability.

"Horrible decision," Rep. Marlin Stutzman of Indiana, one of several Republicans who called for Miller's firing in the days after the vote, told USA TODAY of Trump's move.

To Democrats, business leaders and immigrant advocates, the pick was proof that Trump intended to double down. Sen. Alex Padilla of California, who in a statement called Miller the architect of "the cruelest immigration policies this country has seen in modern times," promised Democrats would answer with subpoenas and investigations once they take power in January.

See MILLER, Page 6A



President Donald Trump has chosen Stephen Miller, formerly his deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security adviser, to become his new chief of staff. ANNABELLE GORDON/REUTERS FILE

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