

Without Trump, U.S. Gives Way to Putin in Asian Summit Lineup

By [Bloomberg](#)

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U.S. President Donald Trump's absence was felt as world leaders gathered on stage for the traditional group photo at the end of one of Asia's biggest annual summits.

Russian President Vladimir Putin -- not Trump, like last year -- took the prominent spot to the right of host Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the end of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations events Thursday in Singapore. Trump's chosen representative, Vice President Mike Pence, stood two places to their left, between Thailand's Prayuth Chan-Ocha and Australia's Scott Morrison. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang was positioned to Putin's right.

It was a visual illustration of how Trump's decision to skip the summit and subsequent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation events in Papua New Guinea -- the first U.S. president to do so since 2013 -- had lowered America's profile. Last year in Manila, Trump stole the show with his botched attempt at the customary "Asean handshake" with host Rodrigo Duterte.

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