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<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33753067>

Angela Merkel is taking a break. After one of the toughest months of her chancellorship, Mrs Merkel chose to unwind - by watching a five-hour performance of the Wagnerian opera Tristan and Isolde. The German chancellor's summer holiday routine rarely alters. She is an avid opera fan, so it is usually a trip to the Bayreuth Wagner festival followed by a stay in South Tyrol. What is different this year is the political storm from which she has emerged in Berlin and the speculation still rife in Germany about her future. It has been a bruising few months. Largely due to the drama of the Greek debt crisis, whose twists and turns could have come straight from one of the operas Mrs Merkel so enjoys. There was open rebellion from 60 of her own conservative MPs, who refused to back a third bailout for Greece. But she was also criticised by those who felt, conversely, her stance on Greece had been too harsh. By refusing to countenance debt relief and allowing her Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schaeuble, to threaten Alexis Tsipras's government with a Greek exit from the eurozone, she went too far, they say. Then, during a televised question-and-answer session, Mrs Merkel was confronted by a crying young refugee. Mrs Merkel's awkward attempt at comforting the teenager went viral. "Merkel makes refugee cry," read one headline. Commentators wonder whether Mrs Merkel's moment has passed. The chancellor is known to enjoy her job. But it is tempting to wonder whether, in the darkness of the Bayreuth auditorium, she also contemplated her own future. There are, after all, decisions to be made. She has been chancellor for 10 years and must choose whether to lead her conservatives into the next general election in 2017. Because, despite those rebellious conservatives, she is unlikely to be pushed out. There are few obvious challengers. Her Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, was once widely tipped as a successor, but she is struggling with the poisoned chalice that is her portfolio. The leader of her coalition partners, Sigmar Gabriel, is a popular figure. Even so - one of his social democrats said recently - there was little point in putting up a candidate from the party trailing in the polls. "It's difficult to win against Merkel," said Torsten Albig. Others speculate about her finance minister. Mrs Merkel is said to have a complicated relationship with Mr Schaeuble - she helped to thwart his chance of becoming chancellor a decade ago. His hawkish policy on Greece went down well domestically. Arguably, it suited Mrs Merkel to have him play bad cop during negotiations, but the finance minister made it very clear he wields real power, threatening publicly to resign rather than act against his principles. There is, however, no evidence Mr Schaeuble - who is in his 70s - is planning a coup. And he would be fighting a chancellor whose approval ratings have remained consistently high. Dr Peter Matuschek, who runs a German polling organisation, said the Greek crisis had not damaged her significantly. If anything, Germans were rather proud of her. "She is seen as a crisis manager," he said. Her focus on compromise is admired in Germany, where the political system values consensus. Even so, at times it can get her into trouble; she was recently accused of turning a blind eye to human rights abuses by the Egyptian government in order to foster bilateral trade. But Germany also admires her ability to broker a deal. That reputation (think late-night talks over Ukraine or the recent G7 commitment to phase out greenhouse gas emissions) plus Germany's economic might has made her one of the world's most powerful politicians. And one of its busiest - the Greek crisis, after all, is not yet fully resolved. There is also Ukraine, and the possibility of the UK leaving the EU. And then there is what is likely to be the next major challenge of her chancellorship. Already, in her absence, German politicians are squabbling over how to deal with rising immigration. As Europe's refugee crisis continues, up to 450,000 people are expected to claim asylum in Germany this year - more than in any other European country. There are complaints about dwindling resources, and attacks on homes for asylum seekers. Mrs Merkel must soothe domestic fears but seek to achieve a sustainable European solution too. During a break in that production of Tristan and Isolde, a chair suddenly collapsed under Mrs Merkel. A subsequent cartoon, entitled Merkel's stuhl (stool), depicted a plush-looking chair - balancing on a single leg. It begs the question - can the German chancellor regain the political support she will need to get through what promises to be a stormy autumn?'

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Article2

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US President Barack Obama has unveiled what he called "the biggest, most important step we have ever taken" in tackling climate change. The aim of the revised Clean Power Plan is to cut greenhouse gas emissions from US power stations by nearly a third within 15 years. The measures will place significant emphasis on wind and solar power and other renewable energy sources. However, opponents in the energy industry have vowed to fight the plan. "I'm convinced no challenge provides a greater threat to the future of the planet," Mr Obama said. "There is such a thing as being too late." Those opponents say Mr Obama has declared "a war on coal". Power plants fired by coal provide more than a third of the US electricity supply. The revised plan will aim to cut carbon emissions from the power sector by 32% by 2030, compared with 2005 levels. "We are the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change, and the last generation to be able to do something about it," Mr Obama said. He likened the plan to taking 166 million cars off the road in terms of environmental impact. He called taking a stand against climate change a "moral obligation". Mr Obama brushed off the notion that the plan is a "War on Coal" that will kill jobs and said he is reinvesting in areas of the US known as "coal country". "Scaremonging" tactics will not work to stop the proposal, he said. "If we don't do it nobody will. America leads the way forward... that's what this plan is about. This is our moment to get something right and get something right for our kids," he said. The Clean Power Plan sets standards to reduce CO2 emissions by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030, which is 9% more than the proposed rules previously set forth by the Obama administration. It sets carbon pollution reduction goals for power plants and requires states to implement plans to meet goals. States have until September 2016 to submit plans, but must comply by 2022. Coal mining states such as Wyoming, West Virginia and Kentucky fear their economies would suffer and people would be laid off. The Administration believes the plan will boost a major climate summit in Paris in December and encourage other countries to submit their own plans. For more, read Breaking down the clean power plan Each US state will have an emission-cutting goal assigned to it and must submit a proposal to the Environmental Protection Agency on how it will meet the target. The BBC's Tom Bateman in Washington says President Obama will hope that Monday's announcement secures his legacy on climate change. The measures, our correspondent says, would give the president the moral authority he needs to argue for global reductions in greenhouse gases at a major conference in Paris later this year. However, several state governors are already saying they will simply ignore the plans. In face of the criticism, the White House said the release of the plan was "the starting gun for an all-out climate push" by the president and his cabinet. In a video released by the White House, Mr Obama said the new limits were backed up by decades of data showing that without action the world faced more extreme weather and escalating health problems. "Climate change is not a problem for another generation. Not any more," Mr Obama said. "My administration will release the final version of America's Clean Power Plan, the biggest, most important step we have ever taken to combat climate change." Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said she would defend the plan if she was elected to replace Mr Obama. "It will need defending. Because Republican doubters and defeatists - including every Republican candidate for president - won't offer any credible solution," she said. "The truth is, they don't want one." One Republican presidential candidate, Marco Rubio, said the plan would be "catastrophic," while another, former Florida governor Jeb Bush, said the plan was "irresponsible and over-reaching". The Supreme Court ruled, it's very clear that the EPA has the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, so regulation is inevitable and I think it's very irresponsible for the Republican leadership to go out there and say we don't have any solutions, this is all wrong, we don't believe in the science, so let's throw up our hands and do nothing," Heather Zichal, a former climate and energy adviser to the president and a key architect of the plan told the BBC's Matt McGrath. "This will be an issue in the 2016 election and because the Democrats have a far more responsible policy position, it will allow them to prevail. "Correspondents say the emphasis on renewable energy sources marks a significant shift from the earlier version of the plan that sought to speed up a transition from coal-fired

power to natural gas plants, which emit less carbon dioxide. It is believed the revised plan will aim to keep the share of natural gas in **US** power generation at current levels. Power stations are the largest source of greenhouse gases in the **US** and account for about one third of all such US emissions. The big question for the president is how to ensure that these carefully crafted rules don't end up in the recycling bin of history. The **White House** believes that by vesting the power to implement these changes in the hands of individual states, they are pulling the rug from Republican claims that this is another **Washington** imposed, big government boondoggle. The president is calculating that the courts will uphold the rights of the **EPA** to regulate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act, as they have done on a number of occasions in recent years. He is also gambling that because of the uncertainty of the courts and the long lead time until the regulations bite, many Republican governors will grasp the nettle and accept the changes. The president sees this plan as the cornerstone of his attempt to secure a global treaty on climate change in **Paris** at the end of the year. But he needs that conference to succeed almost as much as the beleaguered UN process needs him. Getting a deal in the French capital may help "save the world" from the worst ravages of climate change. It would also make it very difficult for his successor to unravel the Clean Power Plan.'

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