



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
September 20, 2008

Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley on the Upcoming United Nations General Assembly

Roosevelt Room

12:43 P.M. EDT

 [Press Briefings](#)

MR. HADLEY: We thought we'd go through the trip to New York next week. I'm going to do what I normally do -- run you through day by day what the itinerary is and then I'd be glad to answer any questions.

Q On the record?

MR. JOHNDROE: On the record.

MR. HADLEY: This is on the record.

On Monday, President and Mrs. Bush will travel to New York to participate in the United Nations General Assembly. The trip will highlight how the United States has partnered closely with other nations to address global challenges and how we've made some remarkable progress. The trip will also provide an opportunity to highlight how the United Nations can better address existing and emerging challenges.

On Monday night, September 22nd, the President and Mrs. Bush will host a reception for other heads of delegation also attending the General Assembly. As you know, this is kind of a traditional event that the President does each year.

On Tuesday, September 23rd, President Bush will meet with President Zardari of Pakistan. They are expected to focus on cooperation in combating terrorism, strengthening Pakistan's economy, and fostering democracy in Pakistan.

President Bush will also deliver his final speech to the United Nations General Assembly. His speech will highlight the current challenges facing multilateral organizations like the United Nations and how to improve the ability of these organizations to meet these challenges.

The President will attend an event on food security, and then the President and Mrs. Bush will host a lunch for political dissidents to discuss how to advance the freedom agenda and how to advance the

protection of the rights and dignities of all people.

The President will then meet with Secretary General Ban to discuss the full range of challenges facing the United Nations, including U.N. reform, Georgia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Burma, and Zimbabwe.

The President will also co-host an Iraq coalition meeting with President Talabani of Iraq, consisting of those countries who participated in the coalition on the ground in Iraq. Both leaders will deliver remarks that will underscore the significance of a more stable and prosperous Iraq for a more hopeful future in the Middle East. And then they will thank the members of the Iraqi coalition for their contribution to achieving that -- progress towards that objective.

On Wednesday, September 24th, President Bush will participate in a meeting on free trade with leaders of a number of nations in this hemisphere. The United States has signed free trade agreements with 12 Western Hemisphere nations that represent two-thirds of the region's GDP and one-third of our global bilateral trade.

Comprehensive free trade agreements in this hemisphere have contributed significantly to opening economies, reducing poverty, and strengthening democracy. The President will stress the importance of expanding those benefits by securing U.S. congressional approval of the Colombia and Panama free trade agreements.

As honorary ambassador of the United Nations Literacy Decade, Mrs. Bush will host the White House Symposium on Advancing Global Literacy: Building a Foundation for Freedom. This will happen on Monday morning, September 22nd, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The symposium will provide a forum to discuss the outcomes of six UNESCO regional literacy conferences that have been held and were inspired by the first White House Conference on Global Literacy in 2006.

The symposium will highlight literary programs that can be replicated around the world with the support of local and national governments, civil society, and the private sector, and will renew the international commitment to promoting and sustaining global literacy efforts.

They will return on Wednesday to Washington.

I'd be glad to take any questions.

Q Is there a lot of fence-mending to be done with President Zardari over U.S. attacks in Pakistan?

MR. HADLEY: The President has had an opportunity to speak on the phone with President Zardari. It was a very good conversation. The President, as you know, has reaffirmed publically our support for Pakistani democracy and for helping this new government succeed. They obviously have real challenges in terms of a terrorism threat to stability in Pakistan, and they also have various economic challenges. We want to help them and I think they understand that they need our help. And I think it'll be a productive meeting between two countries that recognize we have a lot at stake and a lot to be gained by working together, both of us. And I think that's the spirit in which both of these leaders are

going to come to their session in New York.

Q Can you state what the U.S. policy is with respect to launching either missile attacks or armed force attacks inside Pakistan?

MR. HADLEY: Our policy is that the terrorism threat that is in the border areas of Pakistan and the border areas with Afghanistan is a threat to Pakistan, to Afghanistan, to the United States, and our friends and allies. And therefore, it is a threat in which we need to be working together to try and deal with this challenge. We have, as you know, encouraged trilateral cooperation between the United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. We obviously have more to do.

It is -- we recognize that this is a problem that -- since it is sovereign Pakistani territory, the problem is going to be solved when Pakistan is in an ability to exercise control over that territory. As you know, the border areas, particularly in the FATA, has been a challenge for 100 years for the authorities in power to exercise control over that area. It is a challenge for Pakistan, one that we want to help them with.

But at the same time we recognize that in the short term, right now, there are threats emanating out of that area that threaten Pakistan, threaten our troops in Afghanistan, and potentially threaten the homeland. And therefore, we want to cooperate closely with Pakistan. We also need to ensure as best we can that threats do not materialize out of that area, and that's as far as I can go.

Q It makes me wonder whether or not the administration has an agreement, say, with the government of Pakistan but not, say, the military -- or is there some sort of a -- is there a formal agreement or is it just an understanding? I mean, they're saying they're going to shoot at our troops if we go in there. So, to me, it doesn't seem like there's very much cooperation there.

MR. HADLEY: We work very closely with the Pakistan authorities. I think, as you know, it was in the press that Admiral Mullen was there just this last week. He met both with military officials; he also met with civilian officials. Our Ambassador is very active and is meeting very closely with the full range of officials. So I think we have a good --

Q If there was an understanding that we could do that --

MR. HADLEY: I think we have --

Q -- then why would they say that we could --

MR. HADLEY: I think we have a good understanding with the government, but recognizing this is a difficult situation. The Pakistani government has a difficult challenge. They are a new government. They are a democratically elected government. They obviously are very concerned about Pakistani sovereignty and having that sovereignty respected. That's one point.

Point two: They also recognize there is a serious terrorist threat, and I think the government is

increasingly recognizing it is a threat to Pakistan; that dealing with that terrorist threat is not a favor they're doing to Afghanistan or a favor they're doing to us -- it is something that is essential to their survival.

I think, thirdly, the Pakistanis understand that in the short run they have limited capability to deal with that problem. Look how long it took us to learn how to deal with the counterinsurgency threat in Iraq. It's a daunting challenge and it will be very challenging for the Pakistanis.

And finally, I think they also recognize that while we work with them to enhance their capability to deal with this problem, it is in their interest and our interest to try to make sure that there are not terrorist attacks that can kill Pakistanis. Remember, you know, former Prime Minister Bhutto was killed from an attack that emanated from that area, and I think they understand that if, God forbid, there was an attack from that area, that -- to the homeland of the United States, it would be a disastrous blow for U. S.-Pakistan cooperation.

So there are real dilemmas and contradictions for the United States in dealing with this problem, for Afghanistan in dealing with this problem, and for this new Pakistani government. And we are working closely with them to try and navigate what is a very difficult situation. And that's really all I can say.

Q Were you surprised that they said that they'd shoot down U.S. troops if they came in?

MR. HADLEY: That's really all I can say. Anything else?

Q Steve, two questions. First, on the U.N., can you tell us, looking back over eight years, what the President's view is of how useful the U.N. has been to advancing his foreign policy goals? Does he feel it's been a success, a failure, some kind of in between? What is his view about the U.N.?

MR. HADLEY: I think you'll have an opportunity to hear him, because he will talk about it I think in this -- in his speech. I think what you've heard him before -- I mean, he's gone up to the U.N. every year and I think he has, a number of times, addressed the role for the United Nations. I think he believes the United States has an important role to play in meeting the challenges of this new century, as do other multinational organization --

Q United Nations, you mean.

Q United Nations.

MR. HADLEY: I'm sorry, United Nations.

Q You said United States.

MR. HADLEY: United Nations has an important role to play in meeting the challenges of the 21st century, as do other multilateral -- multinational organizations -- NATO, the EU -- there's a whole range of them.

But I also think that he would say, and will say, that the United Nations, other multilateral organizations, as well as the United States, need to do better at confronting the challenges we face going forward. And he -- in the same way that the United States has been going through a process, and will continue to do so, to figure out how to do better. I think he thinks the international community needs to do the same thing, as does the United Nations, and I think you will find him sharing some of the things we've learned and suggesting that they -- there are some lessons that would allow the United Nations to be more effective.

I'll give you a couple examples of things I think you'll probably hear him say. We think we've learned a lot in the Millennium Challenge Account effort: that we need to have a attitude of partnership, not patronizing; that you want to partner with governments that are making the right decisions for their people -- that are governing justly, investing in their people, understand the power of markets to lift people out of poverty.

I think he will talk about the need to focus on results. As he said many times, and you've heard him say, he's kind of an outcomes guy, not a process guy. And sometimes we spend too much time on the process, not enough time on the outcomes.

I think he'll talk about the sense of urgency -- you know, we are still waiting to get deployment of peacekeeping forces in Sudan, and it is glacially slow.

So I think you're going to hear him say some things. These will not come as a surprise to you, but it will come out of a conviction that there is an important role for the United Nations to play and other multilateral play -- nations play -- that these can be instruments for, particularly, the world's democratic states to work together on dealing with problems that require states to work together if they're going to be solved; and that therefore, they need to be as effective as they can be. And we have more to do to make them effective, and he will have some positive and constructive suggestions on how to do that.

Q Steve, can I ask a couple scheduling things? You mentioned food security is going to be a topic. I wonder if the current economic situation is in any way also factoring into the schedule, whether or not the markets is something that may or may not come up in his meetings. And you also mentioned the political dissidents that he's going to have lunch with -- do you know who that is?

MR. HADLEY: We have made some invites. I'm not sure we have a list. We'll take it and see if we can get a list out for folks -- folks will probably -- if we don't have it, we probably will in the next day or so.

MR. JOHNDROE: Yes, I think we'll release it on either Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning, but we will release a list.

MR. HADLEY: Obviously the agenda for these U.N. General Assemblies gets sort of solidified usually weeks in advance, though they sort of -- it gets -- and so I don't anticipate therein the -- within the U.N. General Assembly meeting any sort of formal events addressing the financial crisis. Obviously it is something that as he goes about meetings, heads of government are going to come up and they're going to ask him about it.

In that respect, the speech he's given today I think will be very useful and reassuring, because it gives a framework for our policy going forward and probably will answer a lot of the questions that he otherwise would have gotten from the heads of state and government. And I think with that announced, he's in a position to be pretty reassuring that we understand the challenge we face, that we are moving aggressively to deal with that challenge, and that's going to be good news to all these countries because we are such an important player in the global economy.

Q If I could ask also about two things that are in the news, both North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs have come up again this week, with North Korea making threats to either back or resume its things -- and the latest IAEA report on Iran -- how much is that going to come up next week? How do you respond to these steps, which don't seem very encouraging?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the -- those issues certainly will come out -- come up. Taking the Iran one first, that is not reassuring that Iran is not cooperating with the IAEA; that is just -- unfortunately it only increases the suspicions that the international community has as to what are the purposes of Iran's nuclear activities. If -- you know, if they were as benign as the Iranians say, then why is there such trouble getting a full accounting of what their activities are, as the IAEA has tried to do?

And I think it will underscore the need for increased action to put pressure on Iran to understand that they have a strategic choice to make: They can continue with this program that is -- continues to be suspicious, if not increasingly suspicious, and they will be -- face increasing isolation; or they can make a shift, suspend their -- verifiably suspend their enrichment program, and come to negotiation and put this on the table and try and find a better way forward.

But it is troubling that Iran has not done so, and since they have not made that strategic choice and seem to be even less cooperative, I think you'll find a call over the weeks ahead for greater pressure on Iran. You heard this last week, we've made some announcements of additional sanctions. We talked I think yesterday about looking at a fourth U.N. Security Council resolution. There will be some opportunities in the next weeks to consult about that and I think you will be seeing an effort by the entire international community to put more pressure on Iran.

On North Korea, it's hard to know whether their statements are -- reflect a change in policy or are simply the kind of negotiating that we've seen before. They have a pattern, as you know, of negotiating and then trying to provoke, if you will, test, create divisions, see if the six parties are serious in sticking together and sticking by their deals.

And we've had a cycle from time to time, but when you go through that cycle and negotiate, they step out, they're obstructionists, they try to divide, and if we stand firm they come back into a negotiating cycle. We don't know whether we're in one of those and this is sort of posturing and pressuring, or whether it's something more than that. I don't think we know now; I don't think we will for a while.

The next step, though, is very clear. They've given us a declaration, given us a declaration of which we have a lot of questions. It was not the complete and correct declaration that we had hoped. We have a lot of questions about them. We've made clear that with the six we're prepared -- with the other five,

with the five, we're prepared to go forward so long as there is a verification protocol that will allow us to answer the questions that are left open in their declaration -- a very reasonable thing to try to keep the process going forward.

We've made it very clear to North Korea that if they accept a verification protocol, we are prepared to go forward and take them off the terrorist list. That's been the President's position for a couple months. What they need to do is say yes -- to accept a verification protocol -- that is something we have worked with the other four or the five of the six-party talks -- accept that verification protocol and we can get back on track and start a process which over time will allow us to verify the declaration they've been made, and move on to the next phase in this process.

We very much want to do that, but it takes six; it doesn't take just five. We, the five, are agreed on the next steps and what is required is for North Korea to accept that agenda going forward. It's a reasonable agenda. It keeps the process moving forward. We hope they will accept it. We'll see.

Q Can I -- to follow up on that, how do the strained relations with Russia now complicate those efforts regarding North Korea and especially Iran? How do you expect to get the approval from Russia on a new resolution in the U.N. Security Council for sanctions on Iran?

MR. HADLEY: No, I think the -- we have in our statements and Russian leaders in their statements have made clear that -- well, two things. One, in our statements, it's very clear that Georgia is a serious matter, and I can go at some length on that, but I think you've heard us; you heard the Secretary of State's speech, you read the Vice President's speech of a week, 10 days, ago when he was in Italy. So what has happened in Georgia is a very serious matter and raises some real concerns.

But we have said and the Russians have said that we do not want to go back to a Cold War, to a new Cold War, or to a new division of Europe. And there has been some willingness on the Russian side and the American side to try and continue to work together on issues of common interest -- and Iran is such an issue. Russia has made very clear they do not want to see an Iran with a nuclear weapon, and our hope is that they will continue to work with us on these kinds of important issues, which are very much in their -- resolution of which is very much in their interest and our interest, and that would include Iran and North Korea.

And we will see. And we have some opportunities in meetings coming up over the next several weeks that will indicate whether Russia is prepared to cooperate in these areas. We think it's in their interest and therefore very much hope that they will.

Q Considering the global concern about the U.S. economy, does he make some representations in this formal speech reassuring the world that he is looking after the American financial system?

MR. HADLEY: We'll have to see on that. He -- we have not actually got a draft into him. He's been a little busy the last couple days.

Q Yes, that's why I ask.

MR. HADLEY: In light of the fact that the speech that he came out with today is just out, I think one of the things that the speechwriters probably on the UNGA speech are doing this afternoon is saying, well, is there a paragraph we got to put into the UNGA speech that addresses that issue. We'll have to see. The President, you know, takes very seriously his speeches and usually has very strong ideas of how he wants to do them. And I suspect we will get some pretty clear guidance from him on what he wants to say and how he wants to say it.

But at this point, he's been focused on the speech he just gave this morning. We'll have an opportunity here in the next day or two to --

Q Does the world want to hear something from him on the state of the U.S. --

MR. HADLEY: I think clearly the world wants to hear something from it, and they heard a lot on it today. And you have -- if you look at sort of U.S. statements and then the movements in the U.S. stock market, foreign stock markets, futures markets and the like, it seems we're in a situation where the whole world is watching how we manage this challenge.

And I think they got some good news today, in addition to some pretty bold steps that have been taken over the last week or so, and that were also outlined in his speech today.

Q Two questions. One, the North Koreans are sending a delegation to the U.N. next week. Are there -- is there any anticipation of meetings between the two sides or the six-party on the sidelines?

MR. HADLEY: I am not aware of any six-party meetings on the sidelines. I don't think it's something we've done in the past. One of the reasons is, of course, that China is the convener of the six-party process. We tend to do those things in Beijing rather than to try and do them on the margins of New York.

My guess is that that will continue to be the pattern. So I'm not aware of anything that has been scheduled now, but things do happen sometimes on short notice.

Q Okay. And what message do you anticipate the President will send, given -- if any -- on the Georgia situation in his remarks up there? Anything new that we can expect to hear from him?

MR. HADLEY: I think he will address it. I think we have -- I think he will do it in terms that are pretty familiar. Obviously we have a way forward as set out in the six-point plan that was brokered by President Sarkozy and then elaborated somewhat in the September 8th agreement that came out of President Sarkozy's visit in Moscow.

It sets some dates, some things to happen by specific dates, and of course it's very important that those things happen on the schedule set out in that agreement. There was one deadline, by September 15 -- it seems to have been met, in terms of Russian troops moving back into Abkhazia. There are other deadlines -- October 1, 10, 15 will be -- I think one of the main messages the President will send is really sort of a three-fold message: one, continue the support for Georgia, both

diplomatically -- and you've seen that by travels by our Vice President and by our Secretary of State, but also in terms of humanitarian assistance and then the billion dollars in reconstruction assistance that we had unfurled. And he will call on other countries to similarly support Georgia.

Secondly he will emphasize, I'm sure, the importance that Russia abide by the undertakings that its leaders have made on its behalf. That is essential for winding down this situation and that Russia abide by its commitments, including the commitment to go back to the status quo ante so that the forces that went into Georgia from Russia after August 6th leave.

And finally, it will be very important to reassure other countries in the world who are watching this that an invasion of a neighboring state is not part of the rules of the road for the 21st century. And as the President has said, that kind of thing is in the past. And the international community ought to be of one voice on that point.

You know, it's a reminder that the United Nations had its origin after World War II in trying to provide a framework so that this kind of activity does not occur in the future. And one of the things the President will do is he will remind people about that responsibility of the United Nations and also the importance of promoting freedom and democracy, because the United Nations was, after all, democratic states largely coming together to found a world organization to try and avoid the history of the Second World War.

Q Are the Russians sending anybody that you or any others in the delegation might be considering meeting with up there?

MR. HADLEY: I think -- Secretary Rice will have a meeting with her counterpart, Mr. Lavrov, I suspect both bilaterally and in a number of meetings that she's got, in terms of addressing various issues. So we expect to have that interaction. I do not believe that either Prime Minister Putin or President Medvedev is coming. So I would anticipate that Foreign Minister Lavrov will head the delegation. He will of course be invited to the reception Monday night. My guess is that the President will have a chance to speak with him at that time. And I'm quite sure that Condi will be doing a fair amount of -- I should say the Secretary of State will be doing a fair amount of business with the Foreign Minister during her week -- her UNGA week, as they call it.

Q Is there any chance of a bilateral meeting with the North Koreans?

MR. HADLEY: At the UNGA? I would be surprised.

Q Sorry, can you --

MR. HADLEY: The question about whether there would be a bilateral meeting of some sort and of some level with the North Korea on the margins of the UNGA -- I don't know of any plans for that. I wouldn't expect it, for the reason I gave earlier.

Q Venezuela?

MR. HADLEY: I wouldn't -- (laughter) -- expect that either.

Q Let's go down the list. (Laughter.)

Q Bolivia? (Laughter.)

Q Would the meeting on Iraq be a good opportunity for any announcement on the negotiations with the Iraqi government?

MR. HADLEY: No, I don't think so. We'll -- we expect those discussions to resume soon. Obviously it's an issue at this point between the U.S. government and representatives of the Iraqi government. We continue to think that this is -- it can be done and will be done, that it's in our interest and in Iraqi interests that -- you know, their goal is they want to get Iraq out of the United Nations, you know. They want Iraq to go back to being a normal state, to get out from under the Chapter 7 status that Iraq has had for, you know, 17 years. And we very much support that. And that's one of the reasons why we think Iraqis believe it is in their interest to have this kind of bilateral relationship with the United States so they're not dependent on a U.N. Security Council resolution to continue to cooperate and help Iraq deal with its security problems.

Q Steve, a larger question. The economic events and the actions the administration has taken this week have occasioned some commentary about how this administration, on both foreign policy and economic policy, has gone in a completely different direction in the second term -- more pragmatic, more -- less ideological than the first term, and some occasioned commentary on different sides of the aisle on that, in terms of from different perspectives. I'm kind of curious your perspective on that, if you think that that is a fair kind of description of the administration's approach in the second term.

MR. HADLEY: I see a lot more continuity, certainly in terms of who this President is, what he stands for, what his values and principles are. I mean, I think you've heard him, you've been listening to his speeches over the last eight years. This is a man who is remarkably unaffected by eight years as President, in terms of who he is, what he stands for, how he thinks of himself.

So -- and in terms of our basic policies, I would say there's a lot of continuity. But situations change. And they change in part as a result of policies that we have pursued, as well as events, some of which you control and some of which you don't. Obviously the Middle East is a very different place now than it was in 2001. And as you -- part of it is because of policies we've pursued; part of it is events that have just occasioned.

So, is our policy going to look different in implementation and application now than it did in 2000, 2001? Sure. Are the basic elements of our policy still in place? I would say yes. Terribly important that we fight terror, that that be at the top of our agenda; in terms of the Middle East, that we try to promote democracy and freedom in the Middle East, to try and support those voices in the Islamic community and the Muslim community that are arguing for a different view of Islam than that espoused by the terrorists -- terribly important for that to happen. Terribly important for the countries of the region not to feel threatened by Iran and Iran's aspirations to -- for hegemony in the region. And we have a series of policies that pursue those objectives in the different context which we have in the Middle East.

So, you know, I think to understand where we are, where we've been, and where the next administration has to go, we need to have a fairly sophisticated conversation. And to say -- to sort of boil it down to say, well, before you wouldn't talk to X and now you're talking to Y -- that shows a change. I think that is a kind of an oversimplified view of the policy.

So I would say that the fundamental -- the basic principles are the same, the fundamental approach is the same, but we have tried to be flexible and entrepreneurial and creative about how we carry out those policies. We've tried to learn as we've gone forward in this situation. And we're going to pass over a pretty complicated set of policies, but one where I think on most issues we hand over situations in which there are a lot of opportunities for the next administration to really do some very good things to advance our interests in the world.

Thank you very much.

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