



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
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## Press Gaggle by National Security Advisor Steve Hadley to the Travel Pool

Kempinski Grand Hotel  
Heiligendamm, Germany

 [G8 Summit 2007](#)

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4:27 P.M. (Local)

MR. HADLEY: Can I frame a little bit what just happened -- would that be helpful?

Q Please do.

MR. HADLEY: We've obviously been concerned about ballistic missile threats from countries or rogue states armed with ballistic missiles, eventually weapons of mass destruction, like Iran. We have been working on a U.S. system to do that. We've obviously wanted to extend protection against this threat to our close allies, to our NATO allies. That's what the proposal that the President had made does with the radar systems in the Czech Republic and missiles in Poland. But the President has also been very clear -- missile interceptors in Poland.

The President has also been very clear that we understood there were Russian concerns. We have had a number of instances of a dialogue with Russia on those concerns. The President sent Secretary Gates to Russia, to Moscow, to meet with Putin; Secretary Rice, as well. And he has said very clearly we ought to consider, and Russia ought to consider cooperating with us in meeting these threats.

And what happened today was, I think you heard from the Russian President and he said to the American President, we recognize there is a potential threat, it is a potential threat to Russia, Europe and the United States, we need to have a dialogue about the nature of that threat. And he made a specific proposal of how Russia might make a contribution to dealing with that threat, in terms of making available, as he said, in real time to the United States and potentially, presumably, to Europe, radar data from a radar that they have in Azerbaijan, built during Soviet times, still operating in Azerbaijan, under an agreement between the Azaris and the Russian government, and making that information available in real time as a contribution to a system that would provide protection against that threat.

He talks about concerns about Iranian missiles. He believes that once Iranian missiles are able to threaten Russia or Europe or the United States were to appear, there would be time to deploy

interceptors which could fall in on the kind of radar architecture he's talking about. It's a bold proposal. I think the way you have to -- it is an interesting proposal, and I think the way you have to read it is a willingness by a Russian President to consider real cooperation and mutual participation on ballistic missile defense -- something that we have been after for the Russians for almost 15 years, and something the President has been calling for.

So, follow up, we had talked going into this meeting and the President had suggested that perhaps there might be some kind of working group between the ministers of foreign affairs and the ministers of defense -- sort of, those four parties taking a look at ideas both in terms of what is the potential threat and alternatives for responding to that threat. This was an idea the President came to. President Putin obviously went further to that and actually made a specific proposal of contribution and cooperation in this area.

So where we are is we have the U.S. proposal that we've talked about with NATO, talked about with the Czechs and the Poles. We have now a Russian proposal. And what the President suggested to President Putin, and he agreed, is let's get our experts together, let's put everything on the table, let's recognize this is a common threat -- as President Putin said, to Russia, Europe and the United States -- everyone has an interest, let's look at these proposals in a very transparent way and see if we can come to a common approach of how to deal with this problem -- both assessment of the threat, current threat, future threat and how to respond to it. And that's what President Putin then agreed to.

Q Would the Azerbaijan thing be instead of Poland or --

MR. HADLEY: We're all going to have to see. We're going to all have to see.

Q But you --

MR. HADLEY: I think that the -- President Putin's language he used out here with you was this would make it unnecessary. And what the President said is, interesting proposal; we have to have our experts look at it; we have some ideas and proposals; we think they make sense. President Putin has proposals; he thinks they make sense. The President's words were: Let's put everything on the table, have a dialogue and look at experts; have the experts take a look at it. And that's what we'll do. And, obviously, we'll do that in close consultation with our European allies, and particularly with the Poles and the Czechs, who we've identified as having an important role in this.

Q You're not rejecting out of hand a substitute of that nature?

MR. HADLEY: We are taking this response for what it is. We've asked the Russians to consider cooperating with us on ballistic missile defense, and I think what we got was a willingness to do so. And the President's approach is, we ought to take that. We've gotten yes to that proposition. We need to put their proposal and our proposal on the table, get experts together and take a look at it.

Q There's also a new threat in what Putin was talking about, what Putin put on the table. He said, not only would it not -- he said to us, not only would the U.S. proposal not be necessary, but it would also not be necessary for Russia to place offensive capabilities on the border with Europe. Did you take that

to be a new development?

MR. HADLEY: No, I took it as walking back from a threat that you know has been made by his military some weeks ago and was suggested -- that Putin suggested in his interviews at the end of last week. And I think what you heard was him stepping away from it and saying if we can have a cooperative solution to this problem that takes into account Russia, European and U.S. needs, then the kinds of targeting comments that were made would not be necessary.

Q -- the targeting?

MR. HADLEY: Yes.

Q It's not anything different?

MR. HADLEY: No. I think it was stepping away from what had been reported.

Q And in the private meetings, were there any new -- any new developments that could be interpreted as a threat or a consequence, negative consequence if the United States didn't --

MR. HADLEY: No. It was -- the tone of it was very different. It was, we recognize it's a threat, we understand that you don't present -- that you don't view what you're doing as a threat; my experts view it in a different way. We've asked our experts to take a look at this problem, and we've come up with a different way of dealing with it, which he wanted to present to the President, and he did present to the President. And it is in the context of U.S.-Russia and potentially European cooperation. That's a good thing. But, obviously, we have an approach, they have an approach. And as the President said, we need to get experts together, put it all on the table in a transparent way, recognize a lot of people have interests in this dialogue, and see where this leads. That's where we are.

Q Is there a possibility of there both being an Azerbaijan component and a component in Poland and Czech Republic?

MR. HADLEY: Sure. That's certainly one of the things we will look at it, and do it in a context where, again, there's mutual reassurance and transparency in this situation so that people can be reassured that the system is what's intended to do, to deal with the kind of rogue states out of a country like Iran. That's what it's all about.

Thanks very much.

Q But he said -- he mentioned no unilateral action. What did you take that to mean? Not the U.S. going forward with the Czech Republic and Poland while you guys were talking with Russia?

MR. HADLEY: I think there's a lot of concern in Russia that actually this system is ready to deploy. And as you know, and as the President said to President Putin, we are years away from being able to deploy this system. So it simply was a comment that while we have an opportunity to discuss, he

hopes there isn't going to be a fait accompli. But it's a concern in a way that I don't think he needs to worry about, because while we want to move forward with this proposal, as we've discussed, it's going to take some time, obviously, before we're into deployment. So there is an opportunity and time for the kind of conversation the two leaders have called for today.

Thank you.

END 4:35 P.M. (Local)

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