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GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 7, 2007

Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Steve Hadley

Via Teleconference

 [G8 Summit 2007](#)

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4:58 P.M. (Local)

MR. JOHNDROE: Hi everyone. Thank you for waiting. Steve Hadley, National Security Advisor to the President, will brief on the President's meeting with President Putin of Russia, as well as make some comments on the G8 declaration.

Mr. Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: The President had a meeting with President Putin. It was a good and constructive meeting. You will probably want to look at the transcript of their comments to the press after the meeting. Obviously, there was a discussion of missile defense. As you know, the United States has been and is pursuing a missile defense proposal that involves radars in the Czech Republic, and missile interceptors in Poland. This is an effort to extend to our European allies protection against ballistic missiles potentially coming from Iran that might be armed with weapons of mass destruction.

We have been in consultation with Russia on this issue, because they have raised some concerns. Obviously, we've had consultations with NATO. We're in close communication with our Czech and Polish allies. We have -- the President has done a number of things to try and reassure the Russians that this is a system not aimed at them in any way, but aimed at a potential threat to Russia, Europe, and the United States, that is to say, ballistic missiles from rogue states that might be armed with weapons of mass destruction.

As part of that, he has indicated that since it is a common threat to Russia, Europe and the United States, Russia ought to consider cooperating with us in addressing this threat. And I think what was interesting about the meeting today was that President Putin -- he did in his public comments, as well -- indicated that he recognized there was a potential threat, with willingness to discuss that threat, and what to be done about it, and actually made a specific proposal of the kinds of cooperation and contribution Russia might be willing and able to make as part of dealing with this threat.

And his idea involved using a radar that was built during the Soviet period in Azerbaijan that continues to operate under an agreement between Russia and the Azerbaijan government, and that he proposed

that that information from that radar site would be fed in real time to the United States, and potentially other countries in Europe as an element, a radar element for missile defense systems. He also suggested that as, and should, that kind of threat emerge, that radar data could be linked into U.S. interceptors on Aegis ships and the like in order to deal with that threat.

So it was a, I think a positive response to the President's call for exploration of ways in which Russia and the United States might cooperate on a missile defense system that would protect Russia, the United States and Europe.

The President's response was to say that it was an interesting proposal. Obviously, it's something that needs to be studied by military experts. And he basically suggested that the proper approach would be for us to get appropriate experts together in a room, put all the proposals on the table -- we have one, obviously the Russians now have one -- put those ideas on the table and see if we can plot a way ahead that would provide protection to all three regions -- Russia, Europe, and the United States -- in a very transparent and open way.

And President Putin agreed with that proposal. We'll need to work out the modalities -- who is going to do the meeting, where, and what kind of schedule. But we think it was a positive development and offers a prospect of trying to bridge the gap on those issues.

So that was, I think, the centerpiece of the discussion between the two men. It was a very substantive, very positive meeting with, I think, a good rapport between the two.

We've also, I think, had a very good day on the issue of climate change. Chancellor Merkel, in her role as President of the G8, has done a really remarkable job of reaching and finding and then reaching consensus on the way forward in terms of how to deal with the issue on climate. And if you read the document, I think a couple of things will stand out. One, it's a recognition that the climate issue is really part of a broader complex of issues involving economic growth, sustainable development, energy security, secure environmental considerations, and climate.

These all need to be addressed in a consistent way so that developing countries recognize that they don't need to protect their environment at the expense of development, growth, and bringing people out of poverty.

It was clear that technology is going to be a key element of this, that there needs to be a way for the emitting countries to come together and participate in this process, because it is going to be -- their participation is going to be critical to the success of a global effort in this context. There's agreement that there needs to be a post-Kyoto framework or agreement, a commitment to try and develop that framework, that a series of meetings that will be held to try and make a contribution to that effort under the framework of, of course, the overall U.N. effort.

And one of the features I think all agreed to is there needs to be a long-term goal, a long-term global goal to substantially reduce emissions. There are, obviously, a number of ideas as to how that should be done, what that goal should be. The document at the conclusion of the meeting will indicate that there are proposals for aspirational long-term goals from the EU, Japan, and Canada. They are

different, involving different percentages, with different base years. So there are a number of proposals out there, and obviously, the process will take them into consideration.

So the commitment is to development of a long-term global goal by 2050, a process for determining that goal, but it does not, of course, involve picking that goal here at Heiligendamm, because obviously, all of the key players are not at the table. And what the United States proposed, and what I think got endorsement here, is a process whereby all the relevant countries can participate in the selection of that goal.

There are other things that are interesting in the report, which you will see: emphasis on development and technology, increasing investment, and research and development, eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers for clean energy technology, greater market access to technology, and approaches -- sector approaches, energy efficiency, power generation, transportation.

There's a lot in it. I think it reflects ideas from our President -- ideas from Japan, from Canada, from Europe, from others. It is a consensus document that can represent a way forward on dealing with the climate issue, and as we say, the President has been quite clear on his praise for Angela Merkel and the job she has done in pulling this all together in this connection, in this G8.

And in terms of introductory comments, I think that's all we have. Why we don't go to questions.

Q Thanks. Steve, last week you practically threw your hands up over the issue of missile defense. You said that Democratic and Republican administrations have been trying for 17 years, and for the life of me, I don't know why the Russians don't agree. I'm wondering after today -- two questions -- first, now do you have cause for optimism that we can actually reach an agreement? And, second, if , what changed?

MR. HADLEY: Well, I think it's really too soon to say where this heads. I think there are some -- obviously, some -- the thing that's interesting is a willingness of the Russian President to make some concrete proposals for missile defense cooperation. That's a good thing. Obviously, we need to look at these proposals, study these proposals. There are a lot of questions you're going to have; there are a lot of questions that we are going to have.

I think what changed is, it was clear that I think Russia had some concerns. I think it was clear that the United States was trying to take those concerns into account. And the rallying point was really a call for the possibility of trying to make missile defense an area of strategic cooperation between the United States, Russia and Europe, since it is a threat that we all face. And I think it was that reality that came through. I think also President Putin wanted to de-escalate the tensions a little bit on this issue. And I think it was a useful thing that he did, and basically accepted the suggestion that the President had made that we try to deal with this together with our European allies.

Q Thanks.

Q Thanks. Steve, I'd like to ask -- the initial reaction from environmentalists has been that the U.S. gave a little bit more than they were expecting, particularly on the 2009 date for reaching a decision on

a follow-on agreement, and also the references to the goal of 50 percent reduction by 2050. Is it correct to say that the U.S. conceded some things here that they had previously resisted?

MR. HADLEY: I think what was -- the President laid out his vision for international cooperation on this issue in the speech he made last week. And, yes, there is in the document a reference to contributing to agreement under the UNFCCC by 2009, but of course, the President's proposal -- and I think it's something that has been accepted and embraced here -- is that we ought to try and work together to develop a new framework by the end of 2008. Certainly that's something that he wants to do and is committed to in order to make a contribution to this debate before he leaves office.

So I think these are ideas that the President talked about last week. The President made clear last week that he accepted the principle of a long-term goal, an aspirational goal; 2050 is the year people have been talking about, that's the year that he emphasized and selected, as well. And what he focused on, then, is what is the kind of process that could produce an aspirational goal that would be embraced not only by the countries represented here at the G8, but also some key countries who aren't here -- India and China and the developing world -- so that it is something where particularly those major emitters will be part of the solution.

So I think it's very consistent with some ideas that the President had last week, but it was also consistent with ideas that have been advanced by others. And, again, the beauty of this meeting was that under Chancellor Merkel's leadership, we were able to bring these ideas together in a common way forward on this issue. And that's a good accomplishment for her.

Q Can I follow up and ask, do you anticipate the U.S.-sponsored process continuing until the end of 2008?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the President said he would like to bring that process, obviously -- our President, he's interested in results, and what he has said is he would like to have these results as soon as reasonably can be expected. He sort of set a deadline out there, by the end or -- at the latest by the end of 2008. But he made clear in his comments today and yesterday that he wants to move on, move forward, and get this process started.

So a lot of players. It's going to take some time, but his commitment is to get on with it and to try and get it done as soon as it can be reasonably done -- no later than the end of 2008.

Q I wanted to know about the North Korean missile test today. Would you call the test provocative; what is the reaction? Or are you not reacting in order to let the six-party process run its course?

And I also wondered if you have found out any other details about the tests, like, how many there were, where it was, when, what time?

MR. HADLEY: I can tell you what I know. What I have been advised is that it is a cruise missile test. We saw, I think in the last week or 10 days, a similar test at that time, and today we have said that we think it is not constructive, it's not helpful. And what we believe that North Korea needs to do is focus on the February 13th agreement and the implementation of that agreement.

And that's really the next order of business. That is what North Korea ought to do, both to carry out its responsibilities, but also to reassure the countries in the region of its intentions to comply with that agreement and, frankly, the agreement of September of a year ago.

Q Do you know details about how many missiles?

MR. HADLEY: I don't have that here. We can try and get that information, but I don't have the specifics on the actual tests. We're pretty far from our information base on that.

Q Thank you.

Q Mr. Hadley, can you clarify, too, from the (inaudible) point, there is no talk about missiles? I haven't heard the word about missiles in Poland. And I did not understand. Is it -- is Mr. Putin suggesting that Azerbaijan takes the place of the Czech Republic, or is he saying that there would be a radar in the Czech Republic and a radar in Azerbaijan?

MR. HADLEY: I think we will have to see. I think if you listen to his comments, I think his suggestion was that this would be an alternative to the radar in the Czech Republic. That may be his idea. We, of course, have an idea that we think it makes sense for the defense of Europe to have a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland.

So he has some ideas, we have some ideas, and the President's point was, let's get experts together and in a very transparent way, recognizing a lot of countries have interests in this, let's put all the options on the table and take a look. The goal, obviously, is a system that will protect Russia, the United States and Europe from these kinds of rogue state threats.

So this is a -- this is a good development, and as the President said, we ought to put all these ideas on the table and take a look. And it may be that some combination turns out to be the kind of system that would provide the best protection for all concerned.

Q But what about interceptors? Did he say the word? Did he talk about interceptors?

MR. HADLEY: He did not. He talked, as I think you heard, if you look at the transcript, he talked about radars, he talked about how the United States could have its own systems, Aegis cruisers, that he thought could actually provide interceptors. As you know, there are limitations to what our Aegis cruisers can do. That's why we've talked about the need for interceptors on the continent of Europe. So that will be one of the issues that will need to be addressed. But we, obviously, have thought that we have a good solution to this problem. President Putin has some additional ideas, some in the alternative, some that may be supplemental. And, again, the President said, let's put all these ideas on the table and get some experts to take a look at them, and that, I think, is the right next step.

Q Thank you very much.

Q Thank you. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about this working group, who might be there -- I know this is new, but any details on that? And, also, did you have any idea that the Russians were going to propose this, or it was totally new for you?

MR. HADLEY: This was an idea that President Putin presented to the President in some detail. It has some elements to it that we have heard before, but was presented in a pretty in-depth way. We had been talking about -- in fact Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had talked about the possibility of a working group maybe involving foreign ministry and defense officials. So this was an idea that was in discussion.

But President Putin really came with an idea of a -- sort of wanted to get into the more details with a proposal of actual -- a sharing approach to dealing with this problem. The two men agreed that it was appropriate to have it looked at by technical experts. They did not discuss exactly who would form that group, where it would meet, how often would it meet. All those details need to be worked out. So there are some ideas about that. As I say, Secretary Rice and Sergei Lavrov have talked about them. But that's one of the things that we'll follow up on as a result of this meeting.

Q Hi, Steve. Are there any political problems or symbolic implications about putting this missile defense program in a former Soviet republic? Does that come into the equation?

MR. HADLEY: Say a little more, Terry. I don't understand what you mean.

Q Basing a missile defense system for the United States and Europe in a former Soviet republic, my question is, is there any political problem or symbolic difficulty with that?

MR. HADLEY: In terms of Azerbaijan?

Q Yes.

MR. HADLEY: President Putin said today that he had actually talked to the President of Azerbaijan about this idea. He said that the radar is operated under an agreement between the Azerbaijan government and the Russian government. He said that he talked to the President of Azerbaijan, and he was amenable to this idea.

So I think in some sense, it is something that -- a decision of which the Azeri government will have to be -- Azerbaijan government will have to be comfortable. President Putin says he's had a conversation with him, and thinks that they are --

Q Steve, I'm not making myself clear.

MR. HADLEY: -- party in these conversations, and we'll want to have further conversation with him.

Q I didn't make myself clear, I guess. It's putting the control of a missile system for the protection of the United States in a former Soviet republic. Is that a problem politically or symbolically for President

Bush, not the President of Azerbaijan?

MR. HADLEY: You talk about "control of a missile system defending the United States in Azerbaijan." What President Putin was talking about was simply using the output from a radar system that is located in Azerbaijan as an input to a missile defense architecture. So it's not that the headquarters of the system is going to be in Azerbaijan, but it was really using a resource that was built during the Soviet period, continues to operate, and could make a contribution to a missile defense architecture. That's what he was talking about.

Q And you have no -- you have no problem with that?

MR. HADLEY: We don't if it's something that the Azerbaijan government is comfortable with. Obviously they're a sovereign state, it is a system that is on their territory, in the same way that Poland and the Czech Republic are going to have to make sovereign decisions about their participation in such a system. So would Azerbaijan. But Azerbaijan is an independent and sovereign country, able to make these decisions and act in a sovereign way, in the same way that Poland and the Czech Republic would.

Q Yes, we're tag-teaming here. Steve, I'd like to understand clearly, are you saying that President Putin did not implicitly accept the premise that interceptors would be based in Poland? And, in fact, is that still a real problem?

And the second question is, to what extent is this an acknowledgment that the development of nuclear weapons in Iran is inevitable, or, perhaps, contrarily, a deterrent to show them that it's truly not worth doing it because we're going to shield you if you do?

MR. HADLEY: Well, no one thinks that is -- this, in any way, suggests the development of nuclear weapons in Iran is inevitable. In fact, all the countries that are talking about this debate are participating in our diplomatic effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and making clear that such a thing is unacceptable. And so we're all agreed on that.

I think one of the things we have said historically about missile defenses, that is a good thing about missile defenses, is that they devalue the utility of ballistic missiles, and therefore discourage countries from developing them. And obviously we would like it not only for Iran not to develop nuclear weapons, that we think is an unacceptable thing, but we'd also like them not to be developing ballistic missiles that they could use to threaten their neighbors with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, or even conventional weapons.

So to the extent it has an effect of discouraging by devaluing ballistic missiles, that is an altogether -- that is an altogether good thing.

So I don't think it reflects in any way an acceptance of these systems, but it's an effort to provide a hedge, and in the same way to deter and a little bit discourage Iran from thinking that there's any kind of military or geopolitical advantage to developing those systems.

You asked me a first part of the question, and I don't think I answered it. Could you remind me what that was?

Q Sure. The first part was, did you hear from President Putin any sort of implicit acknowledgment that the interceptors -- the stationing of the interceptors in Poland is acceptable, or rather, is that something that really remains the biggest problem here, outside of radar?

MR. HADLEY: Well, what he said is, I think -- his view is that the deployment of interceptors at this point is premature, because the long-range missiles that they would be designed against have not yet emerged. And he looks at the current Iranian inventory of missiles and says, there aren't the 4,000- or 5,000-kilometer missiles that would be* needed to threaten Europe.

So his view is, radar cooperation is fine; the decision about deploying interceptors is premature. And once these capabilities emerge in Iran or any other state, there will be time to develop and deploy interceptors. Our concern, of course, is that in order to have defensive systems in place, it takes time. These are long lead-time items, and it would take time to get them deployed. And, secondly, we've been surprised many times by the extent to which countries have been able to dramatically increase the range of their missiles in a way that was faster than our intelligence community predicted.

His view is the decision on interceptors at this point is premature. I think that's his position.

Q I wanted to ask, Steve, you mentioned yesterday that there might have been discussion on Kosovo, and what the next step would be towards Iran. Did that come up? Was any decision made for that? And another side question, is the new radar system that Russia has proposed, would that be a new one made just by them, or in cooperation with the U.S.? You said that they went into lots of technical details. Thanks.

MR. HADLEY: I believe he is talking about an existing system that is in Azerbaijan. I think it was built during the Soviet period. And it is now, as President Putin indicated, operated under an agreement between Azerbaijan and Russia. He called it the Gabala radar. So I think he's talking about an existing radar in Azerbaijan.

The issue of Kosovo and next steps on the Iran nuclear challenge, those were not issues in the bilateral discussion. It is -- I'm sure they are issues that have been discussed or will be discussed in the G8 meetings, and they may be things that the President and President Putin will discuss on the side of those meetings. But in the meeting today, they did not come up.

MS. PERINO: We've got time for one more question.

Q Hi. Did the two Presidents talk about the democracy in Russia, especially regarding tough statements, which we've heard during the last month from both sides?

MR. HADLEY: Again, in the confines of this meeting today, the issue did not come up. Obviously, both men have said some things publicly on that issue. It is an issue that they have discussed in the past,

I'm sure they will discuss in the future. But it did not come up in the conversation today.

MS. PERINO: I think that will have to do it for Steve. He's got another meeting. Thanks everybody.

MR. HADLEY: Thanks for your time.

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