

# WebMemo



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## The 2007 G-8 Summit: President Bush Must Project Strong U.S. Leadership in Europe

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Russian bellicosity and global climate change will dominate the political agenda of President Bush's eight-day visit to Europe. Increased Russian aggressiveness has already overshadowed the start of the President's trip and will continue to take center stage as he stops in Prague on June 5 and Gdansk on June 8. The issue of climate change is likely to lead at the G-8 summit in Heiligendamm, June 6–8. And the final status of Kosovo will be top of the agenda in Albania and Bulgaria when the President visits on June 10 and 11. On these issues, President Bush will face both strong-arming from the Russians and diplomatic pressure from the Europeans. The President must, therefore, maintain a tight focus on projecting America's global leadership.

**Russian Aggression and Missile Defense.** When Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia might point missiles at European targets if the United States builds a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic, he ensured that Russian–American relations would dominate a large part of President Bush's European trip.<sup>1</sup>

Despite America's best efforts, including a visit to Moscow by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and a personal invitation to partner the U.S. on missile defense, Russia has continued to ramp up its rhetoric on America's plans to base 10 long-range, ground-based missile interceptors in Poland and a mid-course radar in the Czech Republic.

Russia's objections to America's plan for missile defense in Europe carry little weight. The system is purely defensive, designed to counter threats to the

U.S. and its European allies from rogue states like Iran and North Korea as well as non-state actors such as al-Qaeda and Hezbollah. Its capabilities are also small in scale, especially in comparison to Russia's enormous estimated arsenal of 16,000 nuclear warheads, 7,200 of which are said to be operational.<sup>2</sup> As Heritage Foundation Senior Fellow Peter Brookes has pointed out, "The European missile-defense site doesn't affect Russia's strategic deterrent."<sup>3</sup>

President Bush must not allow Russia to intimidate U.S. allies and block America's comprehensive ballistic missile defense. As part of a multi-layered system of space-based and sea-based missile defenses, the European ground sites will strengthen transatlantic security and counter the evolving Middle Eastern ballistic missile threat. The Polish–Czech installation will allow America to extend its own security umbrella and protect its European allies at the same time. In addition, Warsaw and Prague would be providing a significant contribution to the NATO Alliance and making a powerful statement in support of NATO's principle of mutual defense. Hosting missile defense facilities would also bring them into a special defense relationship with the United States. The system is a security win

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for the transatlantic alliance, and President Bush should continue to pursue it.

**Climate Change.** The President will also face intense pressure to agree to a post-Kyoto deal on climate change that includes far-reaching mandatory targets to cut carbon emissions. G-8 President and German Chancellor Angela Merkel personally endorsed increasing pressure on the Bush Administration to reverse its environmental policies, despite the U.S.'s superior performance in emissions reduction so far.<sup>4</sup> Further, President Bush's May 31 remarks on the G-8 and climate change have created speculation that he may reverse course and agree to binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions.

The Administration should actively reject entreaties from fellow G-8 nations to agree to growth-sapping controls on energy use and instead continue its successful model in favor of economic development. It must also encourage the G-8 to live up to many of the themes developed at the 2005 Gleneagles Summit, where the Administration placed the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions firmly within the context of economic growth and poverty eradication in the developing world.

The final communiqué of 2005 addressed environmental policy on a number of fronts, including technology and investment-based solution. The United States has taken the lead. America continues to lead the world with its development of cleaner technologies and should continue to insist that investment in new, clean technologies is a key agenda item at Heiligendamm, especially since Europe has failed to concentrate on policies other than Kyoto's cap-and-trade approach since 2005. The EU has arbitrarily capped member states' emission levels and then forced companies and groups to buy carbon credits elsewhere. Europe not only

remains firmly committed to this rigid and inflexible approach for a Kyoto II deal, but also is increasing pressure on the U.S. to sign up as well.

Instead, the U.S. should take prudent steps to increase the reliability of global climate predictions before adopting far-reaching public policies in this area. It must also ensure that any climate change policies have benefits that outweigh their costs. There are risks to global warming, but there are also risks to global warming policies, and the latter could easily outweigh the former.

**Kosovo.** With state visits to both Albania and Bulgaria, the final status of Kosovo will also be high on the President's agenda. After seven years as a U.N.-administered protectorate, it is time to free the people of Kosovo from the deadweight of international trusteeship and determine its final status. The recent proposal by the U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari to the Security Council that Kosovo become independent of Serbia is strongly backed by the Bush Administration, the EU, and the NATO alliance. The proposal, which includes firm guarantees for the protection of Kosovo's Serb minority, should pave the way for the establishment of a fully democratic and ultimately stable and prosperous nation state. The President must hold the line in the face of pressure from Russia or Serbia.

The status quo is simply untenable. Ethnic Albanians make up 90 percent of Kosovo's population, the vast majority of whom wish to be independent and whose leadership have supported the Ahtisaari plan. The U.N. operation in Kosovo (UNMIK) costs a staggering \$240 million a year to run and has fostered a debilitating culture of dependency.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of clarity on Kosovo's final status, it is unlikely that meaningful reform and progress will take place.

1. Sheryl Gay Stolberg and David E. Sanger, "Analysis: Bush and Putin share little common ground before G-8 meeting," *International Herald Tribune Europe*, June 5, 2007, at [www.ihf.com/articles/2007/06/05/europe/russia.php](http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/06/05/europe/russia.php).
2. Adrian Blomfield, "G8 Summit 2007," *The Daily Telegraph*, June 4, 2007.
3. Peter Brookes, "Missiles and misdirection: Russia's stated objection to our missile-defense bases isn't the real issue," *OC Register*, June 1, 2007, at [www.ocregister.com/ocregister/opinion/nationalcolumns/article\\_1714848.php](http://www.ocregister.com/ocregister/opinion/nationalcolumns/article_1714848.php).
4. From 2000 to 2004, U.S. greenhouse gas emissions increased by 1.3 percent while EU-25 collective emissions increased by 2.1 percent. See Kurt Volker, "Post-Kyoto Surprise: America's Quiet Efforts to Cut Greenhouse Gases are Producing Results," The German Marshall Fund, February 12, 2007.
5. United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, "UNMIK Fact Sheet," October 2006.

Kosovo will be able to enjoy stability and security only when its final status is settled. While independence may achieve these ends in the long run, it is essential that the international community continue to guarantee both in the short term. In that respect, international supervision will be necessary to ensure that Kosovo's transition is devoid of Serbian pressure or aggression. While it is likely that the final agreement will be subject to intense negotiation and review before it is settled later this year, the principle of Kosovo's status as an independent nation must remain paramount in the President's statements in Europe.

**Conclusion.** As President Bush begins his agenda-packed European visit, he faces both challenges and opportunities. He has demonstrated a clear vision of America's strategic interest in the past, and his commitment to strong international

defense remains intact. He must not, however, be tempted to negotiate away America's strong record on the environment and international development to please European elites. His visits to the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, and Albania—all freed from Soviet domination with U.S. help—should be a potent reminder of the very essence of strong American global leadership. The President must stand up to Russian aggression and send a clear message to Moscow that U.S. allies will not be intimidated.

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