

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman**

**ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING**

**Ambassador Jeffrey S. Davidow on the upcoming  
Summit of the Americas**

**April 6, 2009  
Washington, D.C.**

**MR. AKER:** Good afternoon, everyone. It's our great pleasure and privilege today to be able to introduce Ambassador Jeffrey Davidow, who is the Special Advisor to President Obama for the Summit of the Americas, which will take place later this month in Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Davidow.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Thank you. Good afternoon. Perhaps it would be helpful if I placed the summit into the context of recent developments. I think as you all know, since President Obama was elected, we have seen a period of intense diplomatic activity with this hemisphere.

Just to review some of the developments, the President of course received, even before the Inauguration, President Calderon of Mexico. After taking office, the President traveled to Canada and received here President Lula of Brazil. He also, of course, interacted with the presidents of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, and the prime minister of Canada at the G-20 summit in London.

The Vice President traveled to Chile for a meeting about – what, about 10 days ago, where he met, of course, with the president of Chile and the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.

The Secretary of State has traveled to Mexico, and other cabinet officers, including the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security, have also traveled to Mexico. And there may be others that I have allowed to slip my mind.

In all of these conversations, of course, the topic of the Summit of the Americas has come up. We are looking forward to it. We have every expectation and sure knowledge that the other presidents that we have spoken to at the level that I have discussed with you, and at other levels that our diplomats are in active conversation with, are all looking forward to this opportunity. This is the fifth Summit of the Americas. And it will give our President the opportunity to meet many of his colleagues, the other 33 democratically elected heads of state of this region. And

this will be an opportunity for him to meet many of them, who he has not yet met.

The summit will be held in Trinidad and Tobago, April 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>. The Secretary of State will accompany the President. The President will stop in Mexico on his way to the summit and spend one night there, then two nights in Trinidad.

What will be discussed at the summit has, in some way, in some measure been already discussed, already communicated among governments in a process that has been taking place for the last – well, almost a year, in which all of the governments that will be represented there have had negotiators in something called the Summit Implementation Review Group – SIRG, but not the kind of surge that we talk about in other parts of the world – S-I-R-G.

And they have just completed within the past few days a document which is quite lengthy, which will probably be published soon, and which is a consensus document among the 34 countries which highlight the issue of greatest importance to this hemisphere – economic development, the environment, energy, alleviation of poverty, and many others. And this document is important in that it represents the views of the entire hemisphere. Now, of course, as a negotiated document, as a consensus document, the rough edges have been rounded off. There are some points that one country or another were insistent on putting in, but other countries would not accept.

Nevertheless, this summit, I think we can say, will focus on the following major issues: First, the economy. Keep in mind that this hemisphere, over the past six years, has done economically very well. The figure that I have is that per capita growth, from 2003 to 2007, just to throw some numbers out, was more than three percent a year. That is higher than the hemisphere has seen in decades. The number of people living in poverty in the hemisphere in recent years has declined – declined absolutely in numbers.

Nevertheless, the economic situation that the world is confronting threatens the hemisphere as it threatens every other country. Those countries which, over the past few years, have adopted very prudent economic management will be less hard-hit than others. That's a fact. But overall, Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the UN, is expected to have negative growth of minus 0.3 percent, meaning – how would you write that? I mean, it's not one percent. It's a third of one percent in 2009 after six years of continuous growth.

This is of concern because the benefits that have come to these societies in recent years are in jeopardy. And that's one of the things the 34 assembled heads of state will want to talk about – how can the world cooperate in lessening the impact. And we saw coming out of the G-20 meeting in London some very real initiatives in this regard, the idea of putting together \$1.2 trillion in new resources, much of it which will be destined to the newly emerging markets, and some of those market countries are, of course, in Latin America. Additionally, the World Bank and the U.S. assistance programs, the Inter-American Development Bank and others, are focusing on this issue. So I think there will be a discussion of that.

The President is going, as he has said on his other trips, in the spirit of dealing with these other

nations as partners. He is not going to Trinidad with a plan for the hemisphere. He is going to Trinidad with the intention of listening, discussing, and dealing with his colleagues as partners. One of his concerns, and indeed the concerns of everyone at the summit, but particularly of the President and the Secretary of State, is the question of equity. We know that there has been progress, as I've mentioned, in this hemisphere on gross domestic product increase and reduction of poverty, particularly abject poverty. But the fact remains that Latin America, according to the United Nations, is the least equal of all the areas of the world. The level of inequity, inequality is very high, higher than anywhere else.

I'm getting a buzz here, but I think we're – or somebody's singing. So we'll just have to – (laughter).

**MR. AKER:** There's construction work going on next door.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Okay, fine. I hope it doesn't bother you.

And there's a real concern to see what we can do working together to speak to the question of this inequity and the need to bring social development and social inclusion to many more people. And here, I think we'll see an effort on the part of the U.S. Government and on other topics that I will mention to reach out and be seen as a partner. Again, no great plan, none of "you must do this," but rather a desire to exchange technical knowledge, best practices knowledge, the best in academic and government thought.

Let me give you one example. One of the most successful ways of dealing with poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent years, programs that are called conditional cash transfers. These began in Mexico. They moved to Brazil. In Mexico, they applied to 5 million families, in Brazil to 11 million families, and they have moved elsewhere. What do we mean by conditional cash transfers? The government is willing and continues to support the poorest of the poor through cash transfers but ties conditions to these grants. And these conditions are essentially children who receive the grants must be kept in school. Children in families that receive the grants must visit health clinics periodically, get inoculated. They must participate in the social programs of the government. So it's conditional in the sense that the families who receive must take certain steps.

And the interesting thing here is that this has been tremendously successful. And in recent months, the city of New York has begun a pilot project of conditional cash transfers. And this was developed when the mayor of New York saw this at work in Mexico.

And I mention this not to stress it too much, but simply to say that this kind of interchange of ideas of technical knowledge in which we can learn as well as impart knowledge is very important.

Additionally, I think there will be a lot of discussion as per this document that I mentioned that has been negotiated about the environment. The United States will want to talk about a green

agenda, an agenda that will focus on clean energy. And in this, once again, it will be largely exchange of ideas, exchange of scientists, exchange of cooperative mechanisms.

This already exists. We already are working with Brazil, for instance, which, as you know, is a leader on biofuels. The United States and Brazil are working together in several Central American countries to help those countries develop their biofuels system. We know that other countries are interested in working with us and with third countries on issues relating to energy conservation, renewable energy, and other topics which form part of a green energy initiative, all of which are related, of course, to our concerns about the environment and global warming.

Again, what we're looking at here are patterns of interconnection, networks which are open. There will be some countries that will want to work with us on biofuels, other countries that won't, who may want to work on something else. But we can do that.

Another major topic that will be discussed at the summit is the issue of public safety. Those of you who know this continent and travel in this continent know that through the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and other places in the hemisphere, perhaps the single most gripping issue for average citizens is the security of themselves and their families. Latin America, the Caribbean are witnessing an increase in criminality and are having difficulty confronting this because of judicial and police systems that need assistance, need more training, need more equipment, what have you. Here again, I think we will see the summit as a good place to discuss this and what we can do generally.

I do think that when all is said and done – and I can name some other areas that we'll be talking about, but let me try to wrap this up so you can ask questions – in the area of macroeconomics, in the area of social equality and social inclusion, the area of public safety, the area of a green agenda, the approach that the President will take will be one of listening, exchanging information, viewing the summit as the beginning of a way of interacting with this hemisphere and reinvigorating the relationship. We hope that the outcome will be a series of partnerships on some of the issues that I've discussed with you, and ongoing processes of consultation. And as I've said, the intensity of the diplomatic activity in the last couple of months should, I think, be an indication of the interest of the Administration and that this will continue.

So let me stop there. I'll be glad to answer your questions to the degree that I have the information you want.

**MR. AKER:** (Inaudible) please give your name and organization. Thank you.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I guess I'll call. Okay, I'm going to – okay.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.) Will the President in the U.S. use the summit to maybe reestablish diplomatic relationships with Venezuela and Bolivia?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, our goal, of course, is to have good working diplomatic

relations with all the countries of the hemisphere. The President is going to the summit. He expects to treat all of the other presidents with the dignity and respect that they deserve. We would hope that that would be reciprocated. We would like to see a diplomatic interchange with all of the countries at the highest possible level.

It's unfortunate that the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia themselves made the decision to expel our ambassadors. That's an unnatural situation, and we hope that that will change. Whether that is – will come about at the summit or whether it is a principal point for the President, I don't think so. I think we need to have more communication, and certainly as a goal, we would like to see that kind of diplomatic relationship that we've had for quite a long time with Bolivia and Venezuela restored.

We do have to be specific here. We do have diplomatic relations. We just do not have ambassadors.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) Sao Paolo. There are rumors about a bilateral meeting between President Obama and President Chavez. Could you confirm that?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, once again, the – did everybody hear the question? Okay. If you don't hear the question – or maybe you don't care – (laughter) – when one of your colleagues asks a question. The question was about a possible bilateral meeting of President Chavez and President Obama.

The President's schedule is not yet fixed. I think, however, it is fair to say that the structure of the meeting itself in Trinidad offers ample opportunity for discussions amongst the presidents. Just so you know, there are three plenary sessions, several meals, one session that is just chief of states only, nobody else, 34 men and women in the room, no one else. So there will be ample opportunity for discussions. I do believe that probably the bulk of the meetings that take place out of that framework that I've just described to you will probably be group meetings. The President would be honored to meet with some of the groups in Latin America, the groups of governments, because it is difficult to try to establish 33 bilateral meetings in the course of a day and a half. But I know that the President is going to Trinidad with the desire and the interest to talk to all of his colleagues.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Lesley Clark with the *Miami Herald*.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Hi.

**QUESTION:** Hi. Do you expect Cuba to be an issue at the summit? Do you not want it to be an issue? And what will you do to see that it's not an issue? Are you getting pressure from other

countries to bring it up? And do you think Cuba should be a participant in the summit?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, to answer your first question, no, I do not think Cuba should be a participant in the summit. This is the fifth summit. And from Miami, you will recall that the summit – the first summit was in 1994 and it was a celebration and in a way it continues to be a celebration of the profound change in this hemisphere as compared to many periods in the past when the hemisphere was marked by undemocratic governments.

In 1994 at the first summit, it was a unique – up till that time, a unique moment in time because every government represented there had been elected, was democratic. And here we are, 15 years later, and that trend of democracy has continued. Cuba was not at the first summit. It still remains an undemocratic state. The United States still hopes to see change in Cuba that at some point will allow Cuba to rejoin the inter-American community. But it will not be at this summit.

Now, will Cuba be discussed, which was your other question. This is an open meeting of 34 heads of state. I don't think one can dictate what is going to be discussed, particularly in – as I mentioned, there's one meeting which is a private meeting just of the heads of state. In a way, we believe that it is not – it would be unfortunate if the principal theme of this meeting turned out to be Cuba. As I've told you, I think there are a lot of very important issues that warrant discussion, whether it's the economic issue, social inclusion, the environment, public safety. We would prefer, obviously, to focus on what we have been preparing for, but there is no effort on our part to try to stifle conversation on any topic.

**QUESTION:** A follow-up on Cuba. If you just said that the U.S. is looking for dialogue, then why not include Cuba if you want to open better relationships with the continent?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, we are obviously interested in having the best possible relations with – you know, with countries that you had mentioned, Venezuela and Bolivia, and other countries. Our relationship with Cuba is a complicated one. It's a complex one, and I don't intend to dissect it here.

But the fact of the matter is, is that the United States seeks and would like to see and would hope that others in this hemisphere would like to see a Cuba which affords to its people the same kind of minimal rights which almost every other country, indeed every other country that will attend this summit, does afford to their people as a – as democratic nations.

So I don't think it makes sense to try to compare Cuba and Venezuela or Ecuador or China or what have you. The fact of the matter is, is these have different histories, different backgrounds, different political situations, and we just have to be realistic about that.

May I – I'll continue – okay, you, sir.

**QUESTION:** Dan Dombey, *Financial Times*. Two questions, if I may. First, would you view the President's longstanding pledge to get rid of the restrictions on family visits to Cuba as just a

humanitarian – just a – justifiable on humanitarian grounds, or is there also an element to which that improves relations with the rest of the continent?

And secondly, the President also, of course, on his trip is going to Mexico ahead of the Trinidad summit. Can we expect any more deliverables in terms of the relationship with Mexico, or should we be content with what we've just got in the last couple of weeks in terms of –

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, look, I think our policy with Mexico is fairly well established. The President and the Secretary of State, indeed the whole cabinet, have made it clear that our relationship with Mexico is of the highest priority. We have programs of support for Mexico, the Merida Initiative, which are on their way into being implemented. The level of cooperation between the United States and Mexico is higher than it ever has been in a whole range of issues, but in – particularly in terms of law enforcement. And Mexico is, as you can see, daily in the newspaper making very strong efforts and successful efforts.

On the question of relaxation of some of the restrictions in our policy towards Cuba, the President has said while he was in campaign and has been repeated since and the Secretary of State has said that – and the Vice President most recently in Chile, that we can expect some relaxation and changes in terms of the restrictions on family remittances and family travel. And as the Vice President said in Chile when he was down there, this does not include a lifting of the embargo.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, just more broadly on Cuba policy, is the Administration hopeful that, you know, the changes that have been going on there and changes in the – you know, the Cuban-American population or organizations – is the Administration hopeful that these can – will help bring about a closer relationship up – perhaps upgrading to an embassy, the interests sections, that kind of thing?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I'm not going to comment on domestic politics here. The fact of the matter is that for all of the reportage and speculation about changes in Cuba, the fact remains that the situation in that country as it relates to the freedom of its own citizens does not seem to have changed with the departure of Fidel Castro from the presidency, at least the formal departure, and the advent of his brother.

What I think is very important in talking about Cuba is that we should view Cuba in the context of this hemisphere, which, as I said, is a democratic hemisphere. Back in the '60s and '70s and '80s when governments in this hemisphere were run by military dictatorships, when there were countries with political prisoners with no free press, Cuba, though special, was not totally unique in terms of human rights. Now, it is clearly the odd man out. As I say, there is no government in --

**QUESTION:** Are you talking about Cuba under Batista or under Castro?

**QUESTION:** (Laughter.)

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I'm talking about both.

**QUESTION:** Okay. But so --

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** And I'm glad you recognize that there's not much difference. That's your point.

**QUESTION:** What -- okay, so if that's the case, and things haven't changed and you don't want to comment on internal politics, why ease the restrictions? Why --

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** The President has said, made the point that he wants to allow Cuban Americans to have, as a matter of both moral -- a moral matter and the question of elemental justice, to have more contact level --

**QUESTION:** Does the Administration see that as a way to bring change if more money is going in, if there are exchanges --

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** The President has said that he thinks that Cuban Americans are the best possible ambassadors --

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** -- of this -- of our system when they visit that country.

**QUESTION:** And what about the idea -- there are moves afoot on the Hill to lift -- to allow all Americans, not just Americans with families in Cuba to go -- what is -- what's the Administration's position on that?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I think that's an issue still to be debated. But right now, what the President is looking at is -- and I can say this because I know; I've read his promise in his May speech while he was a candidate in Miami that there will be lifting of restrictions on the question of -- or a lessening of the restrictions on remittances and travel.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Hi, Farah Stockman with *The Boston Globe*. Can you give us a sense of whether the President is taking any environmental experts in his entourage as the Secretary did when she went to China?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I'm sorry, environmental experts?

**QUESTION:** Yeah. You were saying environment might --

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** You know, I think it's a fair bet that there will be people traveling with him who are very knowledgeable about this. But quite frankly, I haven't seen the list of people who are traveling with the President as yet. I do know that the concern about a green agenda, clean energy, cooperation with countries in Latin America on exchange of information and programs and ideas about energy, and also looking forward toward the Copenhagen meeting and the questions relating to climate change – these are important.

The whole issue of adaptation, to take one topic in which governments and countries try to adapt to the impact of climate change, is something which, as you can imagine, is of great significance in the hemisphere, and particularly in the Caribbean where this meeting is going to be held, where so many island states are concerned, and I think rightfully – I'm not making a scientific judgment – about issues relating to climate, sea level, what-have-you. So I think it's a pretty good bet that the President will have experts with him, although he's pretty knowledgeable himself.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Scott Wilson from *The Washington Post*. The President is concluding a trip now where he has had, on several occasions, to defend the American role in the economic crisis. He's about to – this trip will take him into a region where the Washington consensus is used as an epithet frequently and where the United States is seen as the chief culprit behind the current economic downturn, especially with emerging markets.

How much criticism are you expecting and how far is the President willing to go to take responsibility for the economic downturn in the hemisphere?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I don't think that it's a question of the President taking responsibility. In fact, the President has said that there's a shared responsibility in the world relating to the economic situation and a shared commitment and responsibility to find ways to ameliorate the impact. I think that is the message that he will take. I think the message at the G-20 meeting was directed towards that. Keep in mind, as I said, the G-20 – five of the countries represented at the G-20 will also be at the summit – Canada, the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

So I don't think that the President's interested in getting into the blame game or the defense game. It is what it is and let's --

**QUESTION:** You don't think he will with President Chavez and President Morales and President Correa there?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I think that our President is totally capable of presenting the position of the United States without going to the summit for confrontation. We're going to find

ways to cooperate more.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Jeff Mason with Reuters. Two follow-ups on two issues that have just been discussed – first on climate change, can you give any more details on what kind of preparatory work towards Copenhagen might be done at this summit? Will there be any bilaterals specifically on that issue? Are there any specific goals you’ll be looking for?

And second, on the issue of Cuba, just broadly, what will the President tell his fellow participants about the U.S.’s strategic review of that relationship?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, on climate change, I would direct you to, you know, the special negotiator for climate change. I don’t think that we should expect specific outcomes – negotiating outcomes from this summit. It’s not the time and place, it would seem to me, when you get heads of state together. I’m sure that the President will mention it and the desire to cooperate, but that cooperation will be taken care of at other levels and not at the summit.

In terms of Cuba, I think the President will say that, you know, we are engaged in a continual evaluation of our policy and how that policy could help result in a change in Cuba that would bring about a democratic society there. I don’t think he’s going to be in any way unwilling to discuss that. As I said, however, there’s a very long agenda of topics that we think are quite important, that other governments think are important, and it would be unfortunate if the conference spent more time on that topic than it would have to.

Why don’t I take just a couple more questions? Well, I’ll keep going and – did I – yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) from *Valor Economico* from Brazil. The President, during the campaign, he talked a lot about so-called energy partnership for the Americas, and you didn’t say anything about this.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** Did the framework – as the concept of the general framework for the continent was abandoned because of difficulties that you might face from several countries? Or --

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I don’t think it’s at all – and I’m glad you’ve asked that question, because there is a real desire to have an energy partnership for the Americas, particularly focusing on issues of green energy. What is also clear is that one size does not fit all, that there are some countries that are more anxious to work with us, compare notes, exchange information, exchange scientists, compare best practices on certain issues within the energy matrix and less interested on others.

As I mentioned, Brazil has expressed great interest in expanding its cooperation and

collaboration with the United States on biofuels. Other countries are similarly interested. Chile is particularly interested on the question of renewables. And I think the partnership will be an open partnership, open to those governments and indeed nongovernmental organizations and others that are interested in working together. So the partnership concept is very much alive, and I'm glad you asked that question.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thank you, Ms. Sonia Schott with DPA. Going back to the economic issue, is President Obama going to ask Latin American countries to contribute more to the financial institutions? And as you say, this is a negotiated or consensus draft. Do you have already a sense of the willingness of the countries to do so? Thank you.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Actually, in one sense, I think it's important – and I'm glad you asked that question – the issues relating to macroeconomic topics are mentioned in the draft that has been completed. But it is an incomplete message because it came – it was negotiated prior to the G-20. So I expect to see some kind of some – new summary statement about economics at the summit. And what countries can do, either domestically or internationally, is something they will have to work out themselves. Though I think we are finding in many countries in the hemisphere similar concerns and similar intents to act, some stimulus packages in some countries.

So this is a principal topic. I'm sorry, I'm – let me clear my throat. Okay, yeah.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) Sao Paulo from Brazil. The government has not appointed many ambassadors to the region, the new ambassadors. Isn't that complicated at this point?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, appointing ambassadors is always complicated. I can tell you that I think this government is moving very fast. But you just have to remember that our system, when it comes to appointing ambassadors, is very slow. Individuals must be selected, they must be vetted, **agrément must be requested – that is, the permission of the receiving country – there must be Senate hearings, and then there must be Senate votes.**

**It is not unusual, especially when political parties change, the White House changes, that many ambassadorial posts go unfilled for six months, eight months, nine months or more. And these delays are always accompanied by articles in the press of Latin America saying, what does this mean, why don't we have a new ambassador, what is the underlying motivation?** And as sometimes, very infrequently, happens, the press gets it wrong. (Laughter.) It has nothing to do with sending political messages. It has to do with our very convoluted and complicated system. And as somebody who has been through this a few times, I can tell you it's complicated. But it is not a political issue. It's a bureaucratic issue.

**MR. AKER:** We have time for about two more questions.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Yes, ma'am.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. (inaudible) from Bloomberg News. To what extent do you think the Colombian trade deal will come up as an issue, and is there any – has there been any shift in President Obama's opinion on that deal since the campaign?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I don't know if this will come up at the summit because there are, you know, many bilateral issues that, you know, are of concern to one country and the United States and not to other countries.

On Colombia, the Administration has said the following about the trade negotiations: that it wants to move rapidly in relation to Panama and getting the Panama trade deal approved by Congress, and it is going to move ahead on the Colombian trade deal as well, and that this will be done probably more slowly because there are still some benchmarks that have to be met.

I call your attention to a statement issued by the U.S. Trade Representative on President Obama's trade policy about three weeks ago. And if you missed it, I'm sorry.

**QUESTION:** I had a quick follow-up. Just when will this draft be released?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** You know, I don't know. I think it's still being substantively – the draft of the declaration of the summit. I think it's been done. Now it has to go to a committee, what they call the style committee. (Laughter.) This is not made up of fashion designers. And that is being worked on just down the street at the OAS. So I don't know when it's physically going to be available.

I guess that will be our last question, okay? Okay, one, two. All right?

**QUESTION:** Yeah, to follow up on Cuba again, there's been a lot of speculation that the President may announce some change in Cuban policy before. Also, last week, there was a letter from Senator Lugar recommending that the United States drops its opposition to the entrance of Cuba in the OAS. And my question is whether there is any chance that he follows this advice or that he makes any announcement before.

I forgot, my name is Diana Molineaux of Cuba Broadcasting.

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I'm sorry you forgot your name. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** I forgot to say my name, to mention my name. (Laughter.)

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** First, as I said, the President has made it clear that we can expect to see some changes, particularly relating to remittances and family travel. When those are actually announced, I cannot tell you.

In terms of Senator Lugar's letter, I can tell you that Senator Lugar is a very highly respected person. I would not – in saying that, I'm not trying to give you any hint one way or the other that his ideas will be accepted, but when Senator Lugar offers ideas, you know, people do look at them with serious intent. However, I don't want you to feel that that presages some change in our policy because there's really no way to say that.

**QUESTION:** A final – please, sir. About you saying you couldn't say when the changes would come down, but it is your expectation it would be before the summit?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** I really cannot say. But I would not be surprised, okay, if it came before the summit. But I do not know. That is – those are decisions that I am not making and I do not know when it could happen.

But the President has said he's going to do it, he's going to make some changes. The Vice President has repeated that. So they're going to happen. I can't tell you exactly when.

**QUESTION:** And the size of the U.S. delegation – is it really going to be a thousand people?

**AMBASSADOR DAVIDOW:** Well, I've been involved in many presidential visits, I've been on the receiving end when I was ambassador in Mexico. I don't know the exact size of the delegation, but it's large. The fact of the matter is, is that most of the people who travel on these delegations are there for purposes of security, for purposes of communication. Those of you who have gone on presidential trips, and I'm sure most of you have, you know that wherever the President is, he has to be in immediate – immediately contactable, so the communications are immense. And of course, they have to be manned 24 hours a day.

So I do think that whatever the number is, and I don't know what it is, it's a large number of people. But I don't think it's any – from what I can see by way of preparation, it doesn't seem to me to be in any way out of the ordinary from past presidential visits.

Thank you all very much.

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