

Reports: McFaul to Be Named U.S. Ambassador to Moscow

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The  Moscow Times

Michael McFaul, U.S. President Barack Obama's top adviser on Russia, will be appointed the new ambassador to Moscow, The New York Times reported Sunday, citing anonymous White House sources.

The appointment was discussed during Obama's meeting with President Dmitry Medvedev at the G8 summit in France last week, the report said.

McFaul refused to comment, Interfax reported. Reuters and The Associated Press confirmed the nomination, citing unidentified senior officials in the Obama administration.

McFaul would replace John Beyrle, named during the last days of George W. Bush's presidency in 2008. His appointment would have to be confirmed by the Senate, which has not named a possible date for a hearing.

McFaul, 47, who taught political science at Stanford University before Obama moved into the White House in January 2009, is considered a main architect of the "reset" policy in U.S. -

Russian relations announced by Vice President Joe Biden in February 2009. Ties had fallen to post-Cold War lows during Bush's and Vladimir Putin's presidencies, and the centerpiece of the reset is the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty ratified by both countries in February.

McFaul is a director of the National Security Council and co-head of the bilateral Civil Society Working Group, a duty he shares with Vladislav Surkov, Medvedev's deputy chief of staff and political ideologist.

If appointed, McFaul would become the first ambassador to Russia in 30 years who is not a career diplomat, The New York Times said, adding that the appointment of Obama's close aide indicates the importance that the U.S. president gives to the Russian direction of his foreign policy.

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