

Obama Jokes About Open-Mic Gaffe

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Critics may accuse U.S. President Barack Obama of many things, but one thing that they can't say is he lacks a sense of humor.

Obama opened a speech Tuesday in Washington with a joke about his gaffe when whispered remarks to President Dmitry Medvedev in Seoul were caught by open microphones last week.

"It is a pleasure to speak to all of you," he told an Associated Press luncheon. "And to have a microphone that I can see."

In Seoul, Obama, leaning close to Medvedev and touching his hand, explained that he would have more "flexibility" to work with Russia on missile defense after the U.S. presidential election in November. Nodding his head, Medvedev replied, "I will transmit this information to Vladimir." President-elect Vladimir Putin will return to the Kremlin next month.

Speaking at the luncheon Tuesday, Obama said, "Feel free to transmit any of this to Vladimir if you see him."

The open-mic exchange overshadowed other news from the Seoul summit on nuclear issues,

and Obama's opponents accused him of appearing weak on missile defense in front of Medvedev.

The United States and Russia are at loggerheads over U.S.-led NATO plans to place a missile defense system in Europe.

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