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Obama to Skip APEC Summit in Vladivostok

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A model of Vladivostok, where the APEC summit will be held later this year.

U.S. President Barack Obama will skip the APEC summit in Vladivostok in September, Vedomosti reported Friday, as Obama's spokesman insisted that there were no hard feelings about President Vladimir Putin's decision not to attend a G8 summit next week.

Obama has notified the Kremlin that he will not participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit on Sept. 1-8 because of obligations connected to his re-election bid at home, Vedomosti said, citing an unidentified Russian diplomat.

Obama intends to attend the Democratic Party national convention, which opens on Sept. 3 and will formally nominate him as its candidate in the November election, the report said.

Obama will accept the nomination on Sept. 6 at a stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, according to the convention's website.

The absence of the U.S. president would dent the prestige of the APEC summit. The Kremlin

has poured billions of rubles into upgrading Vladivostok's infrastructure and making other preparations for the event, which, among other things, is meant to showcase the Far East as an investment opportunity. Putin has made the economic development of the Far East a priority of his presidency.

Meanwhile, Obama's spokesman Jay Carney said the president was not offended by Putin's decision to skip the Group of Eight summit that he will host at Camp David, Maryland.

Putin called Obama on Wednesday to say that he would send Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in his stead because he was busy forming a new government after his inauguration this week.

"It was not a surprise, and it does not at all feel like a snub. It was something we understood and understand," Carney told reporters Thursday, according to a transcript on the White House website.

He dismissed speculation that Putin had used the formation of the new government — a responsibility that is, incidentally, tasked to the prime minister — as a flimsy excuse and that he might have other reasons, like wanting to avoid criticism about a violent police crackdown on protesters in Moscow this week.

"President Putin was just sworn into office and is obviously forming a government, and the [U.S.] president absolutely understands that," Carney said.

"We're not disappointed," he said. "The president and President Putin had a very good conversation. And the president looks forward to meeting with Prime Minister Medvedev at the G8 and looks forward to meeting — his first meeting with President Putin — in one month."

The two leaders are scheduled to hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, on June 18-19.

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