

Duma: Don't Read Into Summit 'Snubs' by Obama, Putin

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U.S. President Barack Obama won't make it to the APEC summit in Vladivostok for which this bridge was built.

State Duma deputies cautioned against misinterpreting U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to skip the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, which some saw as a response to President Vladimir Putin backing out of this weekend's G8 meeting at Camp David.

The Obama administration on Tuesday [confirmed](#) news that the U.S. president would not make the trip for September's APEC summit in Vladivostok as it coincides with the Democratic National Convention.

United Russia Duma Deputy Andrei Klimov said politicians should resist viewing Obama's decision as a reaction to Putin's skipping of the G8 meeting.

"I know that in Russia and the United States, there are those who see a direct response by the American president to the Russian head of government, but I personally believe that the

official explanations given on this matter are sufficient, and there is no need to start any additional scandals,” Klimov told Interfax.

The parliamentarian said that although he accepted Obama’s explanation, the U.S. president “could have taken half a day to visit a neighboring country and to participate in the APEC summit.”

Klimov defended Putin’s pullout from the G8 meeting, noting that the Russian Constitution requires that a list of candidates for ministerial posts be presented to the president by the prime minister no later than one week after the prime minister is appointed.

The president is then supposed to hold personal meetings with the proposed candidates. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev submitted the candidate list Tuesday, meaning that this consultation period would coincide with the summit, Klimov said.

Communist Party Duma Deputy Leonid Kalashnikov said Obama’s decision was “completely and wholly explained” by the needs of his campaign.

“If Obama went to Vladivostok in September, his competitors in the presidential race would try to present it as yet another concession to Russia and China,” Kalashnikov told Interfax.

U.S. presidential administration spokesman Jay Carney confirmed reports that Obama would skip the APEC summit, but denied any tit-for-tat politics.

“The fact of the matter is we have a comprehensive relationship with Russia that’s built on working together in areas where we agree and that has borne significant successes, ... and [on being] very clear about where we disagree but not letting those disagreements undermine the overall relationship,” Carney said.

In the first visit of a top U.S. official to Russia after Putin’s May 7 inauguration, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will visit an APEC forum in St. Petersburg in late June, said a senior official in Russia’s APEC delegation, RIA-Novosti reported.

In comments made at a Washington think tank Monday, the official, Gennady Ovchenko, said he was told that Clinton would lead a delegation to the Women in the Economy forum to be held in St. Petersburg.

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