

Obama Confident that Sochi Winter Olympics Will Be Safe

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Neither Obama nor his wife Michelle will be attending the Winter Games in Sochi.

Americans hoping to go to the Winter Olympics in Sochi should not refrain from doing so out of concern for their safety, U.S. President Barack Obama said.

"If you want to go to the Olympics, you should go to the Olympics," Obama said in an interview broadcast Friday on CNN.

Obama said he would feel more confident if the Games were being held inside the United States, but added that he thinks the "Russian authorities understand the stakes" and the "potential threats that are out there."

Asked what advice he would give to close friends who want to go to the Olympics, Obama said he would tell them: "Sochi is safe and that there are always some risks in these large international gatherings."

Obama also referred to bilateral cooperation on security at the Games, a topic that has come

under scrutiny after U.S. officials expressed concern over the threat of terrorism in Sochi following two bomb attacks in Volgograd, about 700 kilometers from Sochi, that killed at least 34 people in December.

"We are coordinating with them," he said. " We've looked at their plans."

Despite his assurances, Obama did not completely rule out the possibility of an attack by "some lone wolves or small cells of folks trying to do some damage."

"In these large settings like this, there are always some risk involved and I don't want to completely discount those," he said.

Neither Obama nor his wife Michelle will be attending the Winter Games, which are set to start on Feb. 7.

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