

[Home](#) • [Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs Aboard Air Force One](#)

Search WhiteHouse.gov

**The White House**

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release May 02, 2010

**Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs Aboard Air Force One**

**Aboard Air Force One En Route Gulf Coast**

1:15 P.M. EDT

MR. GIBBS: If I have somewhere to hold onto while we do this -- as you can tell, we're getting closer to our destination.

Q Robert, what changed between Friday afternoon and Saturday morning that you all decided to make this trip?

MR. GIBBS: Well, Friday morning, in our senior staff meeting, we began -- one of the things we talked about was going down there. When I was asked the question we were working on it but didn't have firm plans. And the President just believed it was important to get down there as soon as we could, and the quickest we could get down was today.

Let me give you some brief updates to our schedule. We're going to land as scheduled at Louis Armstrong Airport in New Orleans. The plane will be met by the Governor. The Governor and the President will have an opportunity to spend some time together and talk. Instead of heloing to Venice, Louisiana, we are going to drive because of -- as you can tell and feel descending here -- weather conditions. It's probably about a two-hour drive.

So we're working on the schedule and how that affects our schedule and the degree to which the weather will impact our movements throughout the day. There's a series of weather calls that they're going to have to make as we go along. So bear with us and we will give you guys information as quickly we get it.

Q So it's still possible he might be able to chopper back to Armstrong after the briefing?

MR. GIBBS: It's possible, yes.

Q Is it just wind or is there some other --

MR. GIBBS: I was told there was a tornado watch in the area.

Q Is the Governor going to ride with the President down to --

MR. GIBBS: We're working on logistics.

Let me also say this. As you know, John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, is onboard and briefed the President on what we knew about New York on the helicopter ride to Andrews. Brennan -- Mr. Brennan has talked obviously with Secretary Napolitano. Secretary Napolitano had talked to Mayer Bloomberg. John Brennan has also spoken this morning with the FBI and NYPD.

For about 50 minutes at the beginning of the flight, from roughly 11:25 to 12:15 p.m. Eastern Time, the President was -- went through a series of briefings and updates on the situation in the Gulf with both John Brennan and Carol Browner -- Carol also obviously along on the trip, as well as Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel -- so to get the latest on where we are and the conditions.

Q Is he going to meet with any BP executives when he is down there?

MR. GIBBS: Let me check.

Q Anyone from the seafood industry?



**BLOG POSTS ON THIS ISSUE**

May 24, 2010 3:22 PM EDT  
[Donuts, Health Insurance, and Big Businesses](#)  
Looking at the role of employers in health care under the Affordable Care Act.

May 24, 2010 3:05 PM EDT  
[Auto Lender Lobbyists' Last Stand in the Senate](#)  
As auto-lending lobbyists make one last push to get the Senate to vote in favor of carving them out of Wall Street Reform, a reminder of the reasons not to heed them.

May 24, 2010 2:03 PM EDT  
[Adaptation Summit to Address Impacts of Climate Change, May 25-27](#)  
Addressing the nation from the Rose Garden last Friday, President Obama reminded us that the threats and impacts of climate change are both real and imminent. "We know that climate change poses a threat to our way of life," the President said. "In fact we're already seeing some of the profound and costly impacts."

[VIEW ALL RELATED BLOG POSTS](#)

<a href="#">Facebook</a>	<a href="#">YouTube</a>
<a href="#">Twitter</a>	<a href="#">Vimeo</a>
<a href="#">Flickr</a>	<a href="#">iTunes</a>
<a href="#">MySpace</a>	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>

MR. GIBBS: Again, that's one of the stops that we're hoping to again -- the schedule because of weather calls is being changed a bit because of helo rides.

Q So would you characterize from the briefing he had the situation as worsening?

MR. GIBBS: Look, you'll get a firsthand account of what's going on when we get to the command center today. They went through a series of different scenarios. The President asked what was the latest on -- our first, our biggest priority was just capping the well. So I didn't -- it is a serious situation. I don't know that I -- I wouldn't characterize it necessarily a worsening situation except that it continues to be a very serious situation with a lot of oil leaking into the Gulf.

Q On New York, can you talk a little bit about the incident -- I mean, are you convinced this is lone incident --

MR. GIBBS: I'm not going to get into assumptions about different -- I'm not going to get into assumptions about who might be involved or what their motives might be. It's an ongoing investigation that Mr. Brennan is keeping track of with NYPD and the FBI.

Q Anything new on the capping effort?

MR. GIBBS: You know, again, they went through a series of things on efforts that are being made at those depths to get the machinery to work on the floor. The President got updates on efforts that BP has to essentially -- the best thing I've heard it's called basically putting a funnel on top of the pipe connected to the surface, the part that vacuums up the oil and a host of different things like that.

Obviously Thad Allen, the national coordinator, spoke yesterday during a teleconference on a test that was run yesterday about the releasing of dispersants not on the surface, as has been done throughout the course of this, but instead releasing those dispersants near the source of the leak. Those were tests that he characterized as promising yesterday, and another test I believe is scheduled for today on that technique.

So that's something that hadn't been tried before. I think it goes to show that we are trying everything that we know and even some things that haven't been tried before in order to take the steps necessary to deal with the situation.

Q Are there any members of Congress down here --

MR. GIBBS: None that I'm aware of. But I will double-check. I know there were some members yesterday that took over-flights, but I'm not aware of any members today.

Q On the Time Square incident, can you talk a little bit more about what Secretary Napolitano said on the talk shows today that there's a possibility that this is connected to terrorism?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I would just say, without getting, again, into characterizing who might be involved or what those motives might be, obviously she had said this is an extremely serious situation and we're looking at investigating all those possibilities in conjunction -- obviously we are supportive of the efforts, and helpful to the efforts that NYPD are doing through the FBI.

Q This is another close one for you guys. Christmas Day almost had an incident; this bomb almost went off, but didn't. How concerned are you that the next one is going to be one that actually --

MR. GIBBS: Anne, that's a concern that we deal with every day.

Q I was just rereading some of the reports you all put during the week about the spill, and on Thursday there was one that said, "After several unsuccessful attempts it has become clear BP has to step up what they're doing." Was the focus sort of early on on the capping, and was there a point where you sort of said, oh, gee, the capping has not going to work, we're going to have to really deal with this as a --

MR. GIBBS: I think it would be wrong to characterize the response or any effort of the response as being only focused on one thing. I think generally you've got several things. One, you've got to cap this well. Two, you've got to deal with the oil that has come up and is on the surface and that is spreading. With that, you have to deal with the devastation that could potentially be caused for the local communities, for the economic implications, whether it's shipping or fishing, the environmental impacts.

So I think there are, and there have been since the beginning of this -- look, the first response from the Coast Guard and the Navy to this incident was to search for those on the rig that were missing -- there are 11 that are now presumed dead as a result of the explosion and the ensuing fire. So there has been a response effort that has been focused on all of those different aspects of this emergency, and we had planned from the beginning for a worse-case scenario, and we have made -- and our actions have led from there.

Q Who is the President meeting with in Venice today?

MR. GIBBS: Let me get a full list of all the folks the President will see. We'll keep you guys up to date on who he

sees and all that sort of thing.

Q Is the President hopeful that something will come out of the meetings that he's having today, that it will address the urgent situation right now? Or is he --

MR. GIBBS: Well, look, there's a series of actions -- and I'll get you some information -- I believe there were going to be some announcements about fishing and fisheries sometime during our flight that will obviously impact communities and the local economy and the ability for those impacted to seek some -- to seek compensation for that from the party responsible, which is BP.

So, look, I think the President -- the President has asked this team since the beginning of this incident to do everything humanly possible as aggressively as we can, to manage and deal with this emergency. So I think he's here today to make sure that we are continuing to do all that is humanly possible, focusing on, as I said, many different aspects, whether it's capping the well, whether it's dealing with the spill as it gets to the surface, and so forth.

Yes, sir. Let's take one more, and then I've got to --

Q Is the Supreme Court taking a backseat to this, or is the process still ongoing?

MR. GIBBS: It's still ongoing, but I don't have any updates on the President's involvement --

Q He has been most involved in this -- as he focuses on this?

MR. GIBBS: He's doing a lot of different things.

We should all sit down before we --

Q Will he say something on New York?

MR. GIBBS: Likely will say something at the top of remarks.

All right? Thanks, guys.

END 1:26 P.M. EDT

**Home**

**The White House Blog**

**Photos & Videos**

Photo Galleries

Video

Live Streams

Podcasts

**Issues**

Civil Rights

Defense

Disabilities

Economy

Education

Energy & Environment

Ethics

Family

Fiscal Responsibility

Foreign Policy

Health Care

Homeland Security

Immigration

Poverty

Rural

Seniors & Social Security

Service

Taxes

Technology

Urban Policy

Veterans

Women

Additional Issues

**Briefing Room**

Your Weekly Address

Speeches & Remarks

Press Briefings

Statements & Releases

Presidential Actions

Featured Legislation

Nominations & Appointments

Disclosures

**President's Commission**

**The Administration**

President Barack Obama

Vice President Joe Biden

First Lady Michelle Obama

Dr. Jill Biden

The Cabinet

White House Staff

Executive Office of the President

Other Advisory Boards

**About the White House**

History

Presidents

First Ladies

The Oval Office

The Vice President's Residence & Office

Eisenhower Executive Office Building

Camp David

Air Force One

White House Fellows

White House Internships

White House 101

Tours & Events

**Our Government**

The Executive Branch

The Legislative Branch

The Judicial Branch

The Constitution

Federal Agencies & Commissions

Elections & Voting

State & Local Government

Resources

WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV

En español | Accessibility | Copyright Information | Privacy Policy | Contact  
USA.gov | Subscribe to RSS Feeds | Apply for a Job