

《奥巴马赴欧洲参加G8峰会》

DAVID GREENE, HOST: This is MORNING EDITION, from NPR News. Good morning. I'm David Greene.

President Obama arrived in Northern Ireland this morning. It's his first stop on a three-day European visit that includes a G-8 Summit meeting and also a side trip to Berlin. The president began his tour with a speech in Belfast, where he celebrated Northern Ireland's peace process and told its young people maintaining that peace is a constant struggle.

(SOUNDBITE OF SPEECH)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: Whether you take a stand against violence and hatred and tell extremists on both sides that no matter how many times they attack the peace, they will not succeed, that is in your hands.

GREENE: That's President Obama speaking in Belfast. Now, later today, Obama joins leaders of other industrial countries at a remote golf resort in County Fermanagh for talks on Syria, trade and the global economy.

NPR's Scott Horsley is there.

SCOTT HORSLEY, BYLINE: The G-8 leaders have a working dinner tonight, and Syria is likely to dominate the discussion. President Obama will explain his decision to start sending military aid to the Syrian opposition. The move is being welcomed by Britain and France. Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes notes those countries pushed hard to lift a European arms embargo, clearing the way to send weapons to the rebels.

BEN RHODES: They have shared our positions, generally, on Syria. They've been part of the core group of essentially 11 countries in the Middle East and in Europe that have worked together to strengthen the Syrian opposition.

HORSLEY: But not all the G-8 countries are in favor of arming the opposition. Germany is skeptical. And Russia, a longtime ally of the Syrian regime, is strongly opposed. Obama has a one-on-one meeting this afternoon with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Rhodes says he'll try to persuade the Russian leader that ousting Bashar al-Assad is the best way to prevent a downward spiral in Syria.

RHODES: It's in Russia's interest to join us in applying pressure on Bashar al-Assad, to come to the table in a way that relinquishes his power and his standing in Syria, because we don't see any scenario where he restores his legitimacy to lead the country.

HORSLEY: The president's meeting with Putin follows the opening session of the G-8 Summit, which will be devoted, as in years past, to the struggling global economy. The eurozone now seems in less danger of breaking apart than it did when these leaders met last year at Camp David. But much of Europe is still mired in recession. And the jobless picture in the U.S. is improving only slowly.

Matthew Goodman is a former White House coordinator for the G-8, now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He says look for lots of conversation about how to get the global economy moving faster.

MATTHEW GOODMAN: Relative to last year, you know, things are, you know, somewhat better. Growth is still, you know, very important to the U.S. and to everybody around that table.

HORSLEY: Britain, Germany and the U.S. all see boosting exports as one route to faster growth. British Prime Minister David Cameron, who's hosting this summit, wants to formally launch negotiations over a trans-Atlantic trade agreement. On Friday, members of the European union gave their blessing to talks designed to whittle away at trade barriers between the U.S. and Europe. But they left a carve-out for cultural protectionism. France, in particular, has long tried to shelter its domestic movie and TV industries so the French airwaves aren't further overrun with the likes of "CSI: New York."

That cultural carve-out by the Europeans could prompt the U.S. to defend its own protectionist programs, including Buy American requirements for many government purchases. But White House advisor Caroline Atkinson, who will be at Obama's side for much of the summit, says that's not the way the United States wants the trade talks to go.

CAROLINE ATKINSON: We've made clear that we are very much in support of a broad and comprehensive negotiation. We understand, of course, that both sides have sensitivities.

HORSLEY: Obama is also likely to face questions from his G-8 colleagues about the U.S. National Security Agency's newly revealed surveillance programs, which cast a wide net over telephone and Internet traffic. Residents of G-8 countries have undoubtedly been snared by that net. And White House advisor Rhodes acknowledges that's hit a nerve with some G-8 leaders.

RHODES: We certainly understand that, like the United States, countries in Europe have significant interests in privacy and civil liberties. So we will want to hear their questions and have an exchange.

HORSLEY: Obama will have more to say about liberty and security in Germany later in this week. He's set to speak on the east side of the Brandenburg Gate, 50 years after John F. Kennedy famously declared his solidarity with the citizens of Berlin.

Scott Horsley, NPR News, traveling with the president.