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Background Briefing by a Senior Administration Official on Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki's Visit

Via Teleconference

 [In Focus: Renewal in Iraq](#)

5:09 P.M. EDT

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Hi, everyone. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting a couple of minutes on this call. And again, as my colleague mentioned, I'm sorry this is not at the most convenient time during the week, 5:00 p.m. on a Friday. But I do appreciate you taking the time to do this. I know that people's eyes have been on other parts of the Middle East for the best part of this week. But I did welcome the opportunity to tell you a little bit about Prime Minister Maliki's trip that will be happening next week, and also to give you a little broader context about just what has happened in Iraq since the President visited just about five weeks ago.

What I thought I might first do is talk a little bit about just the schedule, kind of the nuts and bolts, and the who he'll be seeing, and where he'll be visiting, and then, like I said, I'll go into the more contextual points.

I think the overall big point at this -- this is really a quintessential working visit. It's not a pomp and circumstance visit, it's very much an opportunity to get some work done, to have an opportunity for the President and the Prime Minister, who have really already started to build a personal relationship, as I think any of the people on the call who were with the President when he went to Baghdad got a feeling for that.

Basically the President -- the Prime Minister will arrive -- I'm not going to give out times, of course, but he'll arrive in Washington on Monday evening, after he visits London for a brief period earlier that day, and he'll be coming from Iraq. The bulk of his schedule in Washington is on Tuesday and Wednesday. He'll leave Thursday morning to go to New York, and then he'll head back to the Middle East.

On Tuesday, he'll spend a real big chunk of the day with the President, beginning first by having breakfast with the National Security Advisor, Steve Hadley, and then meeting with the President in an Oval Office meeting where the Prime Minister will have a number of his ministers with him. He's bringing several of his important ministers -- it's interesting, he's bringing his oil minister and his electricity minister, as well as a few others in the Oval Office. He'll then do a joint press availability after that, and then there will be a working lunch. The rest of the afternoon for the Prime Minister will be