



G-20 summit grants Obama face time

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By Ryan Remiorz, AP

Canadian police guard the perimeter of the CN Tower on Thursday in Toronto, host city to the G-20 summit.

WASHINGTON — The main topic at this weekend's G-20 summit of major and emerging economies in Toronto will be how to sustain the global recovery, but President Obama will use some time to take an important diplomatic tour 'round the world.

Landlocked recently by the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and other domestic issues, Obama twice has had to postpone a trip to Indonesia and Australia. It's a contrast from his first year in office, when he touched down in every major region of the world.

The president's three-day trip to Canada that begins today will give him the chance to meet face-to-face with many of the foreign leaders he's only dealt with by phone in recent months.

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BACKGROUND: G-20 nations must balance growth hopes, deficit fears

In a 30-hour span, Obama is scheduled to meet privately with new British Prime Minister [David Cameron](#); South Korean President [Lee Myung Bak](#); Chinese President [Hu Jintao](#); Indonesian President [Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono](#); Indian Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh](#); and new Japanese Prime Minister [Naoto Kan](#).

The White House says its emphasis on Asian and Pacific nations is intended to send a message that the U.S. recognizes the region's rising influence in world affairs and the ability of the United States to be a stabilizing force.

Some examples: U.S. support for South Korea's decision to cut off trade and investment with North Korea following a torpedo attack on its warship that killed 46 sailors, as well as last month's decision to keep a contentious U.S. Marine base on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.

"The nexus of power in the world is moving to Asia in ways that were unthinkable just 10 years ago," says Evan Feigenbaum of the Council on Foreign Relations, a former Asia expert at the State Department. "They're carrying the growth story of the global economy on their back."

A recent Pew Research Center survey shows strong majorities in Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea have confidence that Obama will do the right thing in world affairs. Obama fares best,

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however, in Western Europe.

China and India have led the recovery from the global recession with growth rates in the 9%-10% range this year, far surpassing the United States and Europe. In hopes of seeing other countries rebound, Asian leaders are likely to side with Obama against Europe in seeking only a slow turn toward austerity measures.

"What Obama's trying to do is court the Asians. The Asians actually have a subtle difference of view with Europe," says Eswar Prasad, an expert on international economics at the [Brookings Institution](#). "On the economic and political fronts, Asia is where the action is right now."

Obama plans to go to Seoul in November for the next G-20 meeting. He'll also stop in India and Japan.

Obama's first head-to-head meeting Saturday in Toronto — and the only one set so far with a European leader — will be with [Britain's](#) newly elected prime minister. Cameron wants assurances that British oil giant BP will survive the Gulf crisis, and his nation is increasingly anxious about the war in Afghanistan, which claimed four more British troops Thursday.

"This is definitely a high-stakes, high-stress environment to be establishing a relationship," says Heather Conley, a director at the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#).

Differences will emerge on the global economy as well. Cameron's government is seeking tough spending cuts and tax increases, while Obama still favors additional stimulus measures.

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