

Obama takes Afghan strategy to NATO

by UPI

STRASBOURG, France -- U.S. President Barack Obama arrived in Strasbourg, France, Friday, seeking NATO support for his new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy aimed at winning the war.

Obama was greeted warmly as he spoke of renewing and strengthening trans-Atlantic relationships during a town hall meeting.

Noting Strasbourg was a center of conflict during the first and second world wars, Obama said the city represented the center of European unity.

"We must renew this relationship for a new generation," he said. "We must hold firm in our common values."

Obama is using his eight-day trip to build strong partnerships with countries around the world, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said during a briefing aboard Air Force One. Among other things, Obama will try to gain agreement "that Afghanistan and Pakistan are the shared concern of the world, not simply the concern of one country."

Obama is one of 28 leaders attending a two-day NATO meeting in Strasbourg and the German cities of Kehl and Baden-Baden.

Obama traveled to the NATO meeting directly from the Group of 20 summit in London, where he helped broker a deal to tackle the global financial crisis.

The NATO gathering, besides celebrating the alliance's 60th anniversary, will focus on the military campaign in Afghanistan.

Obama unveiled his Afghanistan strategy last week, calling for increases in military, civilian and diplomatic personnel.

He is also expected to urge America's European allies to step up efforts in Afghanistan. NATO has more than 60,000 troops in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban-led insurgency.

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