

Obama makes surprise side trip to Iraq

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- U.S. President Barack Obama made an unannounced stop in Baghdad Tuesday after wrapping up his first overseas visit as commander in chief.

Air Force One landed at Baghdad International Airport under heavy security Tuesday afternoon, as military officials shut down the airport and cleared out roads to the capital, The New York Times reported.

Turkey was the last scheduled stop on the president's tour abroad that included visits to Britain, France, Germany and the Czech Republic. While in Turkey he had a joint news conference with Turkish President Abdullah, addressed the Turkish parliament and held a town hall with students.

White House officials kept the visit to Baghdad under wraps, the Times said, noting there was suspicion in the traveling media corps that a trip to Iraq or Afghanistan was possible. When Obama visited Iraq in 2008 as a presidential candidate, his travel plans were announced in advance.

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