



# Obama Vacation Follows Familiar Routine

August 15, 2013

By Sara Brown

President Obama addressed the nation from outside his Chilmark rental home Thursday morning about the ongoing violence in Egypt.

The briefing took place on the sixth day of President Obama's Vineyard vacation, a week punctuated by security and press briefings and a familiar pattern of golf, dining out and quiet time with family and friends.



First Lady Michelle Obama and president arrive on Vineyard. — Jonathan Wiggs for the Boston Globe

The president and first lady arrived on the Vineyard Saturday for their fourth Vineyard vacation since Mr. Obama was first elected in 2008. The Obamas arrived at the Martha's Vineyard Airport on Marine One, accompanied by two MV-22 Osprey helicopters carrying press, secret service, staff, luggage and the family dog Bo.

Daughters Malia and Sasha arrived on the Vineyard Thursday afternoon to spend the rest of the



week with their parents. The family is scheduled to depart Sunday.

The Obamas are staying at the Chilmark home of David Schulte, a summer resident from Chicago. The 5,000-square-foot contemporary home is off South Road.

With their arrival, the first family and Island residents have settled into a now-practiced routine: Secret Service and off-Island press are a familiar presence, along with the big yellow bus that carries the press pool. On arrival day crowds gathered along the roadside and at Alley's General Store to wave and watch the presidential motorcade.

As the week progressed, the president has also been occupied with increasing violence in Egypt, where more than 500 people have

been killed amid protests and civil unrest. National security advisor Susan Rice is traveling with the president and has been briefing him about the situation, according to the White House.



President Obama reacts while golfing at Vineyard Golf Club in Edgartown. — Steven Senne for the Associated Press

"We deplore violence against civilians," President Obama said Thursday morning. He said the United States opposes the pursuit of martial law, and noti

fied the Egyptian government Thursday morning that a biannual joint military exercise scheduled for next month has been cancelled.

“Going forward I’ve asked my national security team to assess the implications of the actions taken by the interim government and further steps that we may take as necessary with respect to the U.S.-Egyptian relationship,” he said.

While the president paused for a public briefing on world affairs, the Island has been bustling during one of the busiest weeks of summer. Traditions have been slightly modified to accommodate the presidential visit. As it has for the last 152 years, the Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Society convened its annual livestock show and fair, this year with extra signs in place to make sure fairgoers make it past street detours.

“We want to encourage people to come to the fair,” fair manager Eleanor Neubert said. “We are happy that the president is here for a week of vacation. We’ll just work around it.”

Security concerns have intervened in other ways, as residents and businesses have complained about detours and the partial closure of South Road around where the president is staying.

Early Wednesday morning, a Piper PA-28 single engine aircraft violated the temporary flight restriction in place around the Vineyard, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) confirmed. The FAA said the plane departed from Republic Airport in Farmingdale, N.Y. and was heading to Nantucket. Many

Islanders witnessed a brief, noisy scene in the sky off the south shore as military jets zoomed up and down in an apparent response to the intrusion by the small plane. The aircraft later landed at the Barnstable Municipal Airport, the FAA said, and the agency is investigating.



Greeting people before ordering lunch at Nancy’s in Oak Bluffs. — Jacquelyn Martin for the Associated Press

On Wednesday morning, principal deputy press secretary Josh Earnest briefed about 30 members of the press in the courtyard behind Vineyard Square hotel, where the press filing center is located. After a statement about Egypt, he answered multiple questions about Egypt, and also addressed the new health care law, and whether the president has seen the movie *The Butler* (Mr. Earnest did not know). Some asked if the president was using his time on the Vineyard to talk about possible candidates for the chairman of the federal reserve with friends and staff.

Mr. Earnest said a federal reserve chairman decision won’t be made until the fall. “I do think that the vast majority of the president’s time this week will be focused on enjoying a little downtime outside of Washington, D.C. on the golf course and with some friends and with his family,” he said.

Other questions focused on the president’s vacation, and Island complaints about traffic and disruptions during one of the busiest summer weeks.

“The president and his family have been traveling to Martha’s Vineyard since before he became president. And this is a place where they have spent a week or so at the end of the summer together as a family before school starts and before things get busy again in the fall . . . essentially, a family tradition that the Obama family is continuing this year to take advantage of that opportunity,” Mr. Earnest said.

During the first five days of his trip, the president settled into a routine: afternoons on the golf course and evenings out with the first lady. By Thursday, the president had golfed at Mink Meadows, Farm Neck and twice at Vineyard Golf Club. He was joined frequently by aides and White House chef Sam Kass, and also golfed with seasonal Vineyard resident Vernon Jordan, former U.S. Trade representative Ron Kirk, World Bank president Jim Kim and Comcast chief executive officer Brian Roberts.

On a rainy Tuesday afternoon, the president played basketball indoors at the Oak Bluffs School.



President and first lady pose with staff at Beach Plum Inn. — Annie Thornton

The president has also visited with friends, attending a cocktail party at the West Tisbury home of former NPR host Michele Norris Johnson and her husband, campaign advisor Broderick Johnson and visiting Mr. Roberts and his wife Aileen at their home on the north shore in West Tisbury.

Residents and local businesses hoped for a piece of the presidential action. So far, the president and the first lady have frequented favorite Vineyard spots, posing for pictures with staff and often sharing the meal with friends. They dined at Sweet Life Cafe in Oak Bluffs on Sunday. “We’re honored their first night out was with us,” new owner Kevin Crowell said.

On Tuesday, the president stopped by Nancy’s to pick up his order of fried shrimp, fried oysters, onion rings and french fries, taking the order to the home of Valerie Jarrett, a senior advisor and longtime friend of the president.



President Obama makes statement to the media regarding events in Egypt. — Jacquelyn Martin for the Associated Press

Later that night, the couple dined on mussels, lobster and blueberry cake during a date night at the Beach Plum Inn. The couple sat in

the main dining room with other patrons. On Wednesday, they dined at State Road, staying at the restaurant until late in the evening.

Others prepared for a chance presidential encounter. In Edgartown, Edgartown Books had reading suggestions prepared for the first family.

Homemade signs have appeared around the Island, most of them welcoming the Obamas. Crowds gathered wherever the motorcade appeared, hoping for a glimpse and a cell phone picture of the president.

Another popular photo over the weekend featured Frostpaw the polar bear — a man dressed up in a furry white costume. Frostpaw was on Island early in the week to protest the Keystone XL pipeline and encourage the president not to sign off on the pipeline’s creation.

The bear appeared at the Gay Head Cliffs and the Chilmark Road Race, on downtown streets and at a Farm Institute talk with food writer Michael Pollan. On Monday afternoon, he showed up outside the Gazette office in Edgartown with Catherine Kilduff, staff attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity. Ms. Kilduff is a summer resident and helped coordinate Frostpaw’s visit. She said the trip had been planned prior to the announcement of President Obama’s arrival.

“It was lucky timing,” she said.

Remy Tumin and Ivy Ashe contributed reporting.