



Obama Heads to Ghana

•**Ribadu addresses US Congressional c'ttee**

By Olawale Olaleye, 05.17.2009

United States President, Mr. Barak Obama, in his first official trip to Africa, is due in Accra, Ghana on July 10 and 11. He would be accompanied by his wife, Michelle.

Also, former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, will on Tuesday address the United States congressional committee on Financial Services at a hearing billed to hold at the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington.

A statement by the White House Press Secretary on Upcoming Travel by President Obama, said while in Ghana, the US President would discuss a range of bilateral and regional issues with Ghanaian President, John Atta Mills.

The President and Mrs. Obama, according to the statement, look forward to strengthening the U.S. relationship with one of “our most trusted partners in sub-Saharan Africa, and to highlighting the critical role that sound governance and civil society play in promoting lasting development.”

The President is also scheduled to travel to Moscow, Russia , on July 6 to 8 at the invitation of President Medvedev. The summit meeting will provide an opportunity for the United States and the Russian Federation to deepen engagement on reducing nuclear weapons, cooperating on non-proliferation, exploring ways to cooperate on missile defense, addressing mutual threats and security challenges, and expanding the ties between American and Russian society and business.

Obama would then attend the G-8 Summit in L’Aquila, Italy, from July 8 to 10. The Summit and related meetings with world leaders from emerging and African economies will provide an opportunity for the United States to engage with its partners on a broad range of issues. The President will also chair a meeting of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate while at L’Aquila.

The Congressional hearing to be addressed by Ribadu is slated to hold at 10am, local time and would explore the extent and effects of official corruption in developing countries. The hearing would also determine whether and to what extent Western financial institutions have facilitated the transfer of wealth derived from corrupt practices.

The essence of the hearing is to acquaint members of the Committee with the scope and magnitude of corruption in a set of developing countries. Specifically, Ribadu's remarks are expected to relate to his personal experiences, especially on the devastating effects of corruption in building a just society.

As one of the panelists enlisted to address the committee, Ribadu would give oral testimony of between five to six minutes. There will however, be written testimony which may be slightly longer and may be accompanied by exhibits from panelists enlisted for the hearing and for record purposes.

Other committed witnesses who would join Ribadu at the hearing include; Raymond Baker, Former FBI Director, Louis Freeh, and the author of the recent Global Witness study on banks and corruption, Ms.

E. Lawson.

Republicans in the House have also promised to facilitate the attendance of a witness while negotiations are on-going with other possible witnesses.

Ribadu was EFCC chairman between 2004 and 2008 before he was sent on course at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, near Jos. He was later demoted and subsequently dismissed on alleged act of insubordination. There are however court cases filed by his lawyers challenging his dismissal. He has been replaced by a retired police officer, Mrs Farida Waziri.