

Gore speaks of new U.S. partnership with S.Africa

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JOHANNESBURG, May 9 (Reuter) - U.S. Vice-President Al Gore arrived for Tuesday's inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president, saying it would mark the beginning of a partnership between the two countries.

President Bill Clinton is also being represented at the ceremony by his wife Hillary, who arrived in a separate plane ahead of Gore on Monday.

The vice-president told reporters at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts airport the inauguration was a "historical moment for South Africa and all humankind".

The transition from white dominance to black majority rule was "a peaceful, negotiated revolution", he said.

"We see this inauguration as the beginning of a partnership between our two countries that has the potential not only to bring our two peoples together, but also to export the lessons of democracy, market economics, harmony and brotherhood to other parts of Africa and to other parts of our world," Gore said.

He said there had been an exchange of ideas between the civil rights movement in the United States and black Africans in South Africa, and spoke of "lessons being vigorously exported to South Africa".

Gore and Hillary Clinton were to attend a cultural evening in Johannesburg on Monday night before the inauguration in Pretoria.

The vice-president was due to meet Mandela for about an hour on Tuesday.

"I will be discussing with Mr. Mandela how we can be most helpful in facilitating South Africa's relationship to the G-7 and to other nations with whom we can have influence in their behalf," Gore said.

Gore, Mrs. Clinton and most members of the U.S delegation attended a performance Monday night at the Market Theatre.

The U.S. vice-president also intends to use his visit to South Africa to discuss the crisis in Rwanda, where ethnic bloodletting has left an estimated 200,000 dead and touched off a massive flood of refugees.

Gore will talk with Mandela and other African leaders about what can be done to end the violence. The bloodshed has touched off condemnation at the United Nations and elsewhere, but little consensus on how to deal with it.

He heads to Namibia on Wednesday for talks with President Sam Nujoma and will spend the night at a game preserve. Gore also stops briefing in Benin before returning to the United States on Friday.

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