

Sent: Fri, 24 Jun 2011 11:22:36 -0400
From: "Smith, Michele" <michele_smith@ovp.eop.gov>
To: [REDACTED] Hunter Biden <hbiden@rosemontseneca.com>, bbiden@comcast.net, Beau <261penn@gmail.com>, Hallie Biden [REDACTED], Kathleen Biden [REDACTED]
Subject: News piece and wire photos from first greece stop
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(ANA-MPA) -- The wife of US Vice-President Joe Biden, Jill, arrived in Greece on Friday at the head of a US presidential delegation to the 2011 Special Olympics Games, which will commence in Athens on Saturday.

Hours before attending the "Flame of Hope" lighting ceremony at the downtown Athens stadium that hosted the first Olympic Games in 1896, Biden boarded the USS Ramage, a destroyer anchored off the Faliro marina in southern coastal Athens.

"I am looking forward to watching the Games and cheering the athletes," Biden told the assembled crew of the guided missile destroyer.

She was accompanied by visiting US Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

On his part, Mabus, a former Mississippi governor, praised the 279 officers and sailors of the US warship for their role in anti-ballistic missile defence operations in the eastern Mediterranean.

Approximately 7,000 athletes from more than 170 countries around the world, along with their families and thousands of coaches, volunteers and spectators, are expected to attend the Special Olympics Games, the biggest sporting event hosted in the east Mediterranean country since the Athens 2004 Summer Games.

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