



You are in: [Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs](#) > [Bureau of Public Affairs](#) > [Bureau of Public Affairs: Press Relations Office](#)  
> [Daily Press Briefings](#) > [2004](#) > [Press Briefing Transcripts](#) > [October](#)

Daily Press Briefing (Corrected)

**Richard Boucher, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

October 21, 2004

**INDEX:**

**DEPARTMENT**

Statement by Secretary Powell on the Death of Paul Nitze

**CUBA**

Reports of Injuries to Fidel Castro

U.S. Concerns About the Situation in Cuba Under the Rule of Castro

Efforts to Support Democracy in Cuba

**IRAN**

Meetings Between Europeans and Iran on Iranian Uranium Enrichment

Necessity of Iran to Fully Meet its Obligations & Board Requirements

November 25 International Atomic Energy Agency Meeting

**IRAQ**

Role of the United Kingdom in Stabilizing and Assisting Iraq / Statement by Defense Minister Hoon Regarding Redeployments

United Nations Role in Elections / Security Arrangements

Decision by Fiji to Contribute to Security Force

Discussions on Security Arrangements for Elections

Issuance of Travel Warning / Use of Royal Jordanian Airlines

Security Arrangements for Election Monitors

Efforts of the Iraqi Electoral Commission

Query Regarding U.S. Funds for Iraqi Elections

## **SOUTH KOREA**

Secretary Powell s Meeting with Defense Minister Yoon

## **BELARUS**

Presidential Signing of Belarus Democracy Act

U.S. Concerns about Situation in Belarus

Sanctions / Support for Civil Society, Democracy & Independent Media

Report to Congress / Consideration of Next Steps

## **CYPRUS**

Steps to Ease the Isolation of Turkish Cypriots

Query Regarding U.S. Weapons in Cyprus

Query Regarding Visit of Transportation Security Administration Officials

## **CHINA**

Formal Arrest of Chinese Journalist Working for the New York Times

U.S. Discussions with China

Implications for Journalists Working in China / Role of a Free Press

## **NORTH KOREA**

Contact between North Korea & U.S. Representatives in New York City

Monitoring of Food Assistance by Humanitarian Organizations

Use of Various Channels of Communication

## **UNITED NATIONS**

Discussion of Ban on Human Cloning / U.S. Support for Resolution by Costa Rica

## **TRANSCRIPT:**

12:35 p.m. EDT

**MR. BOUCHER:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I don't have any new statements or announcements. I wanted to make sure that everybody saw the statement by the Secretary on the death of Paul Nitze last night. And if anybody doesn't have that, make sure we have a chance to get it to you. It's, I think, a deeply felt passing for all of us, but especially for the Secretary, who has worked with him many times over the years.

That's about all I had to note at the beginning. I'd be glad to take your questions.

**QUESTION:** I pass.

**QUESTION:** Did you hear that Castro fell?

**MR. BOUCHER:** We heard that Castro fell. There are, I think, various reports that he broke a leg, an arm, a foot, and other things, and I'd guess you'd have to check with the Cubans to find out what's broken about Mr. Castro. We, obviously, have expressed our views about what's broken in Cuba.

**QUESTION:** Do you wish him a speedy recovery?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No.

**QUESTION:** No? Do you wish him a speedy demise?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'll leave the man's health alone. I think our view --

**QUESTION:** Would you have preferred that his injuries be more life threatening? (Laughter.) People have come out, including your former boss --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I know.

**QUESTION:** -- and said things like, well, we hope the actuarial tables catch up with Mr. Castro. Are you disappointed that he wasn't more seriously wounded?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'm not going to express that kind of disappointment. I think, you know, the events speak for themselves. The situation in Cuban is of our primary concern. The situation of Mr. Castro is of little concern to us, but unfortunately of enormous importance to the people of Cuba, who have suffered very long under his rule. And we think that the kind of rule that Cuba has had should be ended.

**QUESTION:** Do you think if he stepped aside -- that's an "if" question, of course -- whoever succeeds him would provide any policy more to the U.S.'s liking than Castro has?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It would be highly speculative for me to say that at this point, except to note that we do think the people of Cuba deserve democracy. They, like everybody else in the world, deserve a chance to choose their own fate and future, and that the Secretary of State co-chaired an effort on behalf of this Administration last year to identify what we can do to hasten that day and what we can do when that day comes to support the people of Cuba, as they have found their own democracy, which is something we have strong confidence that they will someday be able to do.

**QUESTION:** Different subject. The meeting in Vienna was held today. I guess it's probably a bit early, but I'll try anyway.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Early?

**QUESTION:** No, you haven't -- in fact, you said the Europeans would get --

**MR. BOUCHER:** The Europeans meetings, the meetings between the Europeans and the Iranians evidently have taken place in Vienna. We have seen a bit of press reporting at this point. I'm sure the Europeans, while the Europeans have been in touch in recent days, and I'm sure they will be in touch either today or tomorrow, and we'll hear more from them about the meeting again.

But the important thing about the meeting is what the Iranians say now or after they consult as to whether or not, yes or no -- are they going to comply with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Directors? Are they going to carry out their obligations, or not? And that's what we'll be looking for.

I don't know if it'll come today. I don't know if it'll come tomorrow. Unfortunately, history would lead us to think the answer is going to be no.

**QUESTION:** Are you concerned that the way this is being presented may not lend itself to yes or no, but to, "Let's talk about it again next week, and the week after, maybe the week after that." (Inaudible) for a delay?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think we'll all be able to judge -- well, we'll all be able to judge the kind of circumstances and statements in which responses come out. Is it a yes? Is it a yes is a much, even simpler question than, is it yes or no. And if it's not a yes, and it's not a yes by November, then clearly we'll be facing a situation in the Board where everybody knows that Iran has failed to comply and, as the Board said in September, the matter should be referred further to the UN Security Council. I think it'll, you know, that's the question. The question is on the Iranian side.

As far as the clarity of the Europeans, nothing could have been clearer than what the G-8 said collectively in June, and I think what the Europeans themselves have made clear, that whatever the elements of their package that they are insisting on full, on Iran meeting fully its obligations and requirements from the Board.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** When you said you need a clear answer by November, did you mean November 25th, the board meeting, or the beginning of November?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Well, we think it should have come by last November, but the board meeting is set up in such a way that the -- I think the board -- the Director General has to report and then the countries will face it at the board meeting on the 25th.

**QUESTION:** The Prime Minister of Britain, apparently, has decided to shift forces about in Iraq. This may be more a Pentagon issue than a State Department issue, but there seem to be --

**MR. BOUCHER:** You mean the British Prime Minister?

**QUESTION:** I meant to say that. I don't know what I said.

**MR. BOUCHER:** You said, "the Prime Minister."

**QUESTION:** Oh.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Obviously, we first think of him, but there are some others in the world. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** I apologize.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** There may be some political -- there seem there were political issues here, too. Do you have anything to say about how Mr. Blair seems to be willing to take on a larger role?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think, as you say, the specifics of the military deployment are worked out between the military. It just demonstrates, once again, the kind of role that Britain is prepared to play in a manner that affects their security, our security, the security of all of us, and that is stabilizing Iraq and helping the people of Iraq take control of their destiny and reconstruct their country.

We welcome their announcement, welcome the announcement that Defense Minister Hoon made regarding the redeployments, and I think it demonstrates, once again, that Britain has been a strong supporter, a staunch supporter of the multinational effort to help the Iraqi people establish control of their own country.

**QUESTION:** On Iraq but slightly different. Yesterday, the UN announced that Fiji had agreed to provide troops to protect various UN officials in Iraq in the run-up to and I guess immediately after the election. There's been some talk about the United States also doing a similar kind of thing. Can you tell us what the status is of that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah, let me try to break it down for you a little bit. First, we have encouraged the United Nations consistently to be in Iraq and to play a strong role in preparations for the elections, and we've welcomed what they have done in helping the Iraqis as this gets going, and, in fact, the progress towards the elections is moving along quite quickly. They have passed, I think, four out of twelve of the required elements of the laws. They're printing informational materials. There have been public education campaigns.

So the Iraqi Election Commission is moving on quite smartly. We want the United Nations to be in Iraq to help with the election and to help with other things, and we have consistently encouraged the United Nations to continue to expand its presence and play a vital role there. Part of that, of course, is making sure that they have the security that they need to play that role, and so over time, we, the Iraqi Government, the United Nations, we've all been in touch with various countries about how to provide security for the United Nations.

The structure of that, the understanding of how that would be done, which is there would be personal security detachments of about 12 soldiers each for senior UN personnel and then there would be guard units, company size units, of about 100 to 150 soldiers for security around UN compounds in Iraq. In addition, outside that immediate perimeter, the multinational forces would be providing more general security in the areas where the UN is operating.

So we've seen a decision now by the Government of Fiji to provide two personal security detachments and one guard unit

at one of the UN's three planned mission stations. The UN plans to have mission stations in Baghdad, Basra, and Arbil. So the Fijians are going to pick up part of that personal security requirement, and one out of those three requirements for guard units.

We think that's an important commitment, and we certainly applaud their decision and welcome their commitment here. And this will enable the United Nations, we hope, to further expand its current operations. They're expected, these troops and personal security people, are expected to arrive in the very near future.

The United States, as a matter of fact, has been providing personal security for Special Representative Kazi, UN Special Representative, since he arrived in Baghdad in early August and Fijian personnel are going to assume that -- take over that mission once they deploy.

In addition to that, the Iraqi Government, the UN and the U.S. Government have been talking to one or two other countries about providing the multinational forces portion of UN security arrangements that are -- as called for in Resolution 1546 of the Security Council. These discussions are continuing. I don't have any specifics to report for you at this moment.

In the meantime, the multinational forces are taking up the effort that's needed to provide that kind of protection, and I think I can say safely that the multinational force will meet its commitments for UN security so that the UN, in turn, can meet its obligations, and that will continue to do that as this evolves.

**QUESTION:** But you can't identify those countries. Can you say whether they're Muslim countries -- North Africa, perhaps, Pakistan?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No, I can't at this point. I don't think I know them all. But I think that the main point here is that there are other countries considering it, but if they don't come through, the multinational force will make sure the UN gets the security it needs to carry forward.

**QUESTION:** These personal detachments, though, is the -- I guess you have one now, right? Is that why you're --

**MR. BOUCHER:** We've got one now out there for Special Representative Kazi.

**QUESTION:** Right. Is there -- but when you say the multinational -- if the other countries don't come through, you said the multinational force, would that be U.S. or would that be coalition --

**MR. BOUCHER:** That would depend on the military commanders and what they had (inaudible).

**QUESTION:** All right. So, I don't know exactly, and I don't think the UN knows, either, exactly how many senior officials they're going to be having in Iraq ahead of the election, but by -- from what you've said, it appears that you've managed to secure protection for all two -- for only two of them thus far. Is that right?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The Fijians are going to take up two of the personal security detachments, that's right.

**QUESTION:** But that's two UN officials.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know the total number. It's not that many.

**QUESTION:** You don't expect the UN to have --

**MR. BOUCHER:** But I don't know the total number yet.

**QUESTION:** But, wait, total number of what?

**MR. BOUCHER:** How many personal security detachments they'll need.

**QUESTION:** And because the UN hasn't decided how many senior officials they're going to have then?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It depends on how many senior personnel are deployed, yeah.

**QUESTION:** But just to be clear, Richard, you're not talking with other countries on the UN's behalf on these personal security detachments. You're focused on the kind of extra security for additional UN personnel for the election.

I mean, they're handling their security for the facilities and for the detachments. Is that correct?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No. Let me try to boil it down, okay?

**QUESTION:** Because the UN said that it was -- it was asking for security on its own. It wasn't working through the multinational force for that.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Let me try to boil it down.

The UN is in contact directly with other countries about providing this kind of security. We know the Iraqi Government, as you know, has been in touch with a number of countries about providing security for the UN, and of course, we're in touch with other countries, too. And for the moment we're, in fact, providing a lot of the security for the UN people who are there.

What's the bottom line on this? We want the UN to have more people in Iraq. We are pleased that Fiji has stepped forward to provide both personal security details and guard force for the UN. That meets part of the UN's requirements. We're talking to two other governments, or several other governments, about the possibility of coming in. But whatever happens, the multinational force has been, and we'll continue to try to make -- do everything we can to make sure that the UN personnel are safe.

**QUESTION:** Did you say whether these people would be under U.S. command? And you know why I ask.

**MR. BOUCHER:** The command arrangements are discussed in Resolution 1546, and this generally falls within the rubric of the multinational force commander, yeah.

**QUESTION:** Richard, people here were saying just a few days ago that Georgia had offered 549 troops for a UN Protection Force. Where does that stand?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think you'll have to check with the Georgians on where that stands. I don't have any news on that. It's one of the countries we're talking to.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Could you say something about the Secretary's meeting today with the South Korean Defense Minister?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Sure.

Yes? No?

**QUESTION:** I have another Iraq question, but go ahead.

**MR. BOUCHER:** The Secretary had a good discussion this morning with South Korean Defense Minister Yoon. So, the Defense Minister is in Washington for the 36th Security Consultative Meeting. The meeting will take place tomorrow, October 22nd, co-chaired between the Defense Minister of South Korea and Secretary Rumsfeld.

Secretary Powell welcomed the Minister to Washington and they talked a lot about our relationship with Korea, including the Secretary's personal history with -- working in Korea. And the Secretary expressed our appreciation for Korean deployments in Iraq and for the way Korea has, as it's emerged as a full-fledged democracy has also taken up some of the burdens of democracy of helping protect the freedom of others, both with their commitment of military forces as well as more and more financial contribution to development and democracy.

I think we mentioned the other in connection with the Secretary's trip to Asia that one of the things he looked forward to doing was to talk to our allies in the region about the adjustments and redeployments that are being in U.S. forces, but to talk in the bigger context of how the restructuring was going on with U.S. forces generally and compare notes and discuss it with them, and indeed this meeting with the defense minister was sort of along those lines.

They certainly welcomed the arrangements that we had worked out with the South Koreans on the adjustment of U.S. forces in Korea, both in numbers and locations. And they also both talked about, for the Korea side and the American side, that the capability was going to be maintained because both of our forces were moving in the direction of maybe having fewer numbers in some places, but having an enhanced technological and organizational capability.

And so we're both putting new money into investment to improve the capabilities of our forces even if the numbers go down. And we've found that that's sort of the overall context for these adjustments that are being made. So they talked about that quite a bit, touched on some economic issues and other issues and the Secretary said he's looking forward to

his trip to Korea. And we understand Minister Yoon has already met yesterday with National Security Advisor, Dr. Rice, so we hope he's having a good visit here.

Okay.

**QUESTION:** Can I go back to Iraq for a second? This has to do with the Travel Warning that came out yesterday, and specifically -- with specific reference to the safety of civilian airline flights in and out of Baghdad. It says in there that civilian airliners are not generally equipped with devices like military planes are to combat the threat from MANPADs, and then goes on to say that U.S. Government personnel in Iraq are only allowed to travel -- are only allowed to use Royal Jordanian Airlines to fly in and out of Baghdad commercially.

Does Royal Jordanian Airlines have -- do their planes have some kind of special defense system to combat MANPADs? And if not, why are they the only airline that U.S. Government personnel can --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'm afraid I don't know what Royal Jordanian Airlines has on their airplanes. You'd have to ask them about that.

**QUESTION:** Well, why is it that U.S. Government personnel are authorized only to use --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Because our security people have looked very carefully at the situation, at the various airlines that are flying and how the thing work in Baghdad and at the airport and have made this recommendation, which we pass on not only to our people, but to all Americas.

**QUESTION:** So this ban on the use of any other airlines by your personnel has to do with the threat from missiles or direct attack?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Has to do with all the things that are --

**QUESTION:** Or does it have to do with the safety of -- or does it have to do with airlines safety issues?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It has to do with all the things that are raised in that paragraph.

**QUESTION:** It doesn't say anything about airline safety issues in that paragraph, and I was under the impression that when these things came out, there was a no double-standard rule so that U.S. citizens would be given the same information that people from the embassy are given.

**MR. BOUCHER:** And that's exactly why it says all these things in that paragraph.

**QUESTION:** It talks about airline safety?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No, it talks about MANPADs.

**QUESTION:** Okay, so MANPADs is the only reason?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Is the principle reason.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Well, then why -- then can you at least find out why exactly it is that Royal Jordanian Airlines is safer --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't think I'm going to be able to explain to you --

**QUESTION:** --than other airlines --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Royal Jordanian Airlines' security questions.

**QUESTION:** I'm not asking you -- no, I'm just asking why, if you can explain U.S. policy --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Because our security people look very carefully at the situation with the various airlines, and including the threat from MANPADs, the risk that this raises on road transportation, and they've looked at the whole situation, come to the conclusion that it's very advisable for our people if they're flying out of that airport only to fly Royal Jordanian Airlines, consistent with the no double-standard rule. We felt that that advice should be shared with the general public as well.

**QUESTION:** Then, could -- I just would be -- it would be appreciated if you could look into why you think, then, than Royal Jordanian Airlines is safer than another airline, in terms of dealing, in terms of defenses from the threat of missile attack.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I doubt if we'll be able to explain it more than we've been able to explain it here.

**QUESTION:** Belarus. The President signed the Belarus Democracy Act. What does this mean in terms of what you may or may not do with respect to Belarus in the future?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think first, the President signed the Act because it's a strong statement that we support, and indeed the President himself in the signing statement that he issued was quite clear about the serious concerns we have about Belarus, about the pattern of increasingly repressive steps against civil society, media, independent academic institutions and pro-democratic and human rights forces. We saw this again in the authority's excessive use of force and reaction to essentially peaceful protests after Sunday's flawed parliamentary elections.

We would note, in particular, reports that Belarusian police beat and detained two prominent leaders of the Democratic opposition, Anatoly Lebedko and Nikolai Statkevich on October 19th. And we've also seen, I think, several reports of beatings of journalists.

The Act reinforces U.S. support for Belarusians who are fighting for fundamental freedoms. The legislation expresses a sense of Congress that we should increase sanctions on the Belarusian authorities. It authorizes increased support for civil society and promotion of democracy and independent media.

I think, as you know, we've had restrictions on non-humanitarian assistance to Belarus for a number of years and we will be looking at further steps that we might take in those areas identified by the Act. In fact, we are looking -- already starting to consider at this point what further steps we might take, but I don't have anything new for you to announce at this moment.

**QUESTION:** But the stuff that you're considering are the ones that are outlined in the --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Right. In these areas outlined by the law.

**QUESTION:** And I believe those are, ban on trade and investment and U.S. opposition at the IMF and World Bank?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I guess I do have the Act somewhere here, but you'll see the full list in the Act, and we'll look at, obviously, at all those things and we're just considering those things and which ones we need to do generally in the area of sanctions on the Belarusian authorities as well as support for civil society and promotion of democracy and independent media.

**QUESTION:** The Act calls for you -- well, not you -- I presume it will wind up being the State Department -- but it calls for the President to report to Congress on a couple things: 1) arms sales by Belarus to state sponsors of terrorism; and also on the personal wealth assets --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Assets and wealth, yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- of Lukashenko and his top leadership.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yep.

**QUESTION:** Does that mean that when you're considering steps that you could be considering steps that deal with, well, specifically on the second one, on the latter, asset freizures -- freezes and --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I can't point to anything in particular at this point. We've begun consideration of what further steps we need to take vis-à-vis Belarus. There are many specifics outlined in the Act. We have looked -- I'd say we're looking in particular at the issue of additional sanctions that affect the Belarusian authorities and how we can support the positive forces of democracy and change.

We'll prepare this report for the Senate and the Congress and the House according to the law, but what conclusions and steps we might be able to take once that's done, it's too early for me to speculate.

**QUESTION:** Well, earlier this month you joined the EU in putting a travel ban on Lukashenko --

**MR. BOUCHER:** (Inaudible.)

**QUESTION:** Is expanding that list a possibility as well?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Again, I'm not in a position quite yet to point to specific steps or to say that this is more likely than that. We'll look at all these areas and generally focus --

**QUESTION:** But that is a possibility, isn't it?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'm not going to pick out one or the other as a possibility. There are probably many possibilities. It's not time to pick one.

**QUESTION:** I just read through -- I just read off to you what it says in the Act about --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Do you want me to read to you all the things it says in the Act?

**QUESTION:** No, no, no.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Those are all the things we're considering. We're considering release. We're considering no loans or financial assistance by any agency, including Export-Import and OPIC; no assistance in Trade and Development Agency; opposing Belarus from every financial institution. And, you know, if I keep going back in the Act we'll find the other things, too.

**QUESTION:** But listed in there -- what is not listed in there is expanding travel bans, and I'm just wondering if that's something that could be considered as well.

**MR. BOUCHER:** As I said before, we'll consider measures that impose sanctions on Belarusian authorities, as well as steps that we can take to promote democracy and freedom.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** On Cyprus. Mr. Boucher do you believe that the Cyprus Government protested today to the U.S. Government about the visit in the occupied territory of Cyprus by U.S. experts to inspect the illegal airports, which is considered as a first big step for the recognition of the (inaudible) state of Raul Denktash?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know. You'd have to ask the Cyprus Government if they protested anything.

**QUESTION:** But do you have anything about the visit of those two U.S. experts?

**MR. BOUCHER:** As we have said, we are looking at steps that can help ease the isolation of Turkish Cypriots. One of the steps we're looking at is the status of travel, and in connection with that we've had some people from Transportation Security Administration go out to Cyprus and look at the airport in the north.

**QUESTION:** According to FAA, with whom I was in touch, they told me that the step has been taken by the State Department. So could you please to give us more details what is going on and what exactly you are planning to do with these two illegal airports in the occupied territory of Cyprus?

**MR. BOUCHER:** As I said, we've had some people out there look at the airport, and when we have any further measures we can announce, we'll announce them.

**QUESTION:** Could you please update us about the well-known issue of the U.S. weapons in Cyprus, which (inaudible) is targeting the disarmament of the Cyprus National Guard and the 950 Greek soldiers who are on the island, according to the 1960 treaties? Since there is unusual silence in Nicosia, are you trying to succeed any kind of compromise?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't have an update for you. I'll have to check on that.

Nicholas.

**QUESTION:** Richard, since you've got all these Travel Warnings about Iraq, do you think it's, or it will be safe enough for American election monitors, like the IRI or IDI, to go there and monitor elections?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know. You're asking me for a prediction several months from now. There are a lot of steps being taken to make the country safer, to deal with the violence, but where exactly we'll be in January, I don't know, and how we might be able to have that sort of election monitoring, again, is something that has to be worked out.

It is very important to remember that the progress that's being made in the elections is very much in the hands of the Iraqi people, and they have done, really, I think, a very important job in starting to prepare for this election. The Independent Electoral Commission in Iraq established an initial database using the public distribution system as their voter register. They've got millions of registration forms printed. Those will be distributed soon through 542 voter registration centers to create an up-to-date register for January 2005.

The Iraqis, as I mentioned earlier, have published four of the twelve regulations required for the election. The first wave of TV electoral advertising has just begun. Two more waves of nonpartisan voter education will take place before the elections, and a draft election code for the media has been written and soon be published.

The Iraqi Election Commission has received funding from the Interim Government, from the United Nations and other donors, and they are hiring thousands of electoral workers. They already have, I think, over a hundred employees, many of whom have already received training in Mexico and Jordan.

So there's a lot of interest. This process for the Iraqi Election Commission is up and running, and principally this will be an Iraqi process to pull through. We have a strong commitment from the Iraqi Interim Government and we see the Iraqi Election Commission moving forward with all the details. To what extent they'll -- I think all of us from the outside, whether it's the United Nations or others, do want to help, to the extent we can, but they'll always be in the principal role in carrying out their own election.

**QUESTION:** Richard, a follow-up. Are you saying that the process will not suffer if outside monitors like Americans couldn't go because of security?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I can't predict at this point how much monitoring there might be, and how much press reporting there

might be, and how much domestic monitoring there will be.

I'm sure we think generally that the process of an election is made better by the presence of outside monitors. So that's always a goal that we and others will share. But I just can't predict exactly how that will be handled at this point.

Matt.

**QUESTION:** Richard, the Secretary's going to be in China on Sunday and Monday, and today, the Chinese apparently formally arrested this researcher for the *New York Times*. I'm wondering if you have any reaction to the arrest, or if you can say if you expect the Secretary to raise this case when he is meeting with the Chinese.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Mr. Zhao Yan, the Chinese journalist and researcher for the *New York Times* was formally arrested yesterday, we understand on charges of passing state secrets to foreigners. As you know, he's been detained since September 17th. We are very concerned about the case and its implications for journalists working in China. The role of the free press is critical to providing information in a strong civil society, and crucial to the respect for liberty and freedoms of all.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are fundamentally internationally recognized human rights, and we view any attempt to stifle the free flow of information with great concern. As you know, we have raised Mr. Zhao's case repeatedly with Chinese authorities, both in Beijing and Washington. The Secretary has raised the issue with Foreign Minister Li in the last meeting he had with the Foreign Minister. We'll continue to raise the case; it may very well come up when we're in Beijing. And we'll continue to emphasize our interest in this matter and our concern for Mr. Zhao's welfare.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Yeah, do you know anything about a delegation of U.S. religious leaders that apparently met with some Hezbollah officials in Lebanon recently?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No, I don't.

Okay.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Boucher, with respect to Jordanians, the illegal airports of the occupied territory of Cyprus, you are doing that in cooperation with ICAO or just unilaterally?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know. You'd have to check locally and find out if others have done the same sort of thing. This particular visit, I think, is just U.S., but I don't know what ICAO and others are doing at this point.

**QUESTION:** It's probably unilateral.

**MR. BOUCHER:** No, I didn't say that. I just don't know what the others are doing and how it's working.

**QUESTION:** And do you think this was because there's --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'll see if there's anything more to say on it, yeah.

Charlie.

**QUESTION:** Yes. Does the Secretary have anything to share, any feelings to share about his hometown team in the South Bronx collapsing and losing to the Red Sox?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I haven't had a chance to ask him, so we'll have to see.

**QUESTION:** Richard, how much money is the U.S. providing for the Iraqi elections, as far as, you know, infrastructure and whatnot? Is there a general figure --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know if there is a general figure. I'll check and see if we can --

**QUESTION:** Could you?

**MR. BOUCHER:** -- if we can find one, yeah.

**QUESTION:** Thanks.

**QUESTION:** There was a report in the South Korean newspaper this morning that there was an informal meeting in New York sometime this week between a North Korean official and U.S. diplomats. Do you know anything about that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** As you know, we do have contact with the North Koreans from time to time in New York, and we did have contact recently. I think it was Monday.

**QUESTION:** Well, do you know -- do you know who, from your side --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know the name. It was basically one of the regular working-level -- routine working-level contacts that we have. The principal topic was questions of the monitoring of food assistance, which has been an ongoing issue for us that we wanted to raise again with the North Korean officials.

**QUESTION:** Wait, so someone from the UN mission, this would have been, on your side?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I assumed it was somebody from Washington, but I don't -- yeah, somebody from Washington, from the desk here.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Someone went up -- it wasn't someone who's based on New York.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah. That's the usual practice.

**QUESTION:** Was it DeTrani?

**QUESTION:** Could you find out whether it was DeTrani?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Working-level wouldn't include DeTrani. I'll double check, just to make sure.

**QUESTION:** In your understanding, the interlocutor on the -- or plural interlocutors on the North Korean side in this working-level meeting, was it someone from the North Korean mission, or someone from Pyongyang who was in New York visiting?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know. Normally -- this was, as far as I understand it, just a regular meeting. Normally, it's somebody from the Korea desk here and somebody from their mission in New York.

**QUESTION:** Well, I'm sorry, but could you expand on what a regular meeting would be? I mean, it's not really regular that the U.S. meets with North Korea. Was there something specific that you were touching base on?

**MR. BOUCHER:** As I said, this channel is useful from time to time when one side or the other has something they want to raise. In this case, we wanted to talk about our -- about allowing humanitarian organizations to monitor food assistance in North Korea. It's an issue that we have raised in various ways from time to time, and it's one that we took this -- wanted an opportunity to raise this time.

**QUESTION:** Do you find that when you have specific issues like this, you try to deal with it on this level because you want to completely separate it from the political and six-party process that the higher-level officials are doing, I mean?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think this is one of the ways that we can convey messages to the North Koreans, and so we use it from time to time as appropriate. It's not a six-party process issue. It's not -- you know, we've always separated humanitarian assistance from diplomatic and political issues, and this is a channel we can use to raise issues when we want to.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Was this the only topic discussed?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't have a full readout of the meeting. I'm not going to get into that practice either, but this is the principal reason for us to raise this, to go there.

**QUESTION:** But can you at least say whether or not the issue, the nuclear issue came up?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know. I just don't know at this point.

**QUESTION:** Well, on the topic that you do know that was discussed, are you aware, or just generally, forget about this meeting, just generally, are the North Koreans addressing your concerns about the monitoring of the food aid?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Over the last year or so, even more that we've been raising this, we've seen, I think, a little bit of progress and some increased monitoring on behalf of the international humanitarian organizations who do provide food aid, and as you know, that led us this summer to be able to say we'd give 50,000 tons in terms of this year's needs. But at this point we still have concerns and think that it can be further improved to meet international standards.

**QUESTION:** Okay. And are you in the process right now of considering a new tranche that the Secretary might or might not, or could possibly be asked to talk about when he's out in the region?

**MR. BOUCHER:** There's no new appeal at this point. We'll keep the needs for this year under advisement. But I am not aware of anything new being discussed at this moment.

**QUESTION:** I've got one more that's unrelated to that.

**MR. BOUCHER:** One more?

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Also the UN. The great cloning debate began again today in New York. I know that you guys have expressed your hope or, well, you've expressed confidence or at least hope that your total ban, or if the Costa Rican-proposed total ban that you support will pass. But you've got some pretty staunch opposition or a staunch competitor in this Belgian proposal, which would not -- which would allow for research and stem cell kind of thing.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** And I'm wondering, since this is supported by several of your other NATO allies, including the British, if you're still as confident as officials were when the General -- out of the General Assembly that the total ban will pass.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I find it hard to evaluate it at this point. I would say that, you know, this is the day that the sixth legal committee, the legal committee of the UN General Assembly begins discussing this agenda item on human cloning, so maybe we'll see more during the course of the debate and the discussion.

It includes discussion of a resolution that's proposed by Costa Rica to draft an intricate national convention to ban all human cloning. That is our position we support on this. We continue to work towards a comprehensive ban. We have joined a large group of nations to co-sponsor Costa Rica's resolution.

The resolution, at this point, has 63 co-sponsors, and we think significant support beyond the co-sponsors. And we hope that during the course of the debate and the discussion that this support will even grow further.

**QUESTION:** Is there ruling for maneuvering on this or is the United States absolutely opposed to any kind of a -- to anything less than a total ban?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Our position, and I think the position of many others who are supporting this resolution is that there needs to be a convention to ban all human cloning, categorically.

**QUESTION:** So there's no room for compromise?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It's a very clear and firm position, I think.

**QUESTION:** But there is no room for compromise?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It's a very clear position.

Thank you.

(The briefing ended at 1:13 p.m.)

DPB #172



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