



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](#) > [December](#)

## Daily Press Briefing

**Richard Boucher, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

December 22, 2004

### INDEX:

#### INDONESIA/EAST TIMOR

Secretary Powell Meeting with Foreign Ministers / Trilateral Meeting / Reaching Closure on 1999 Crimes / U.S. Having Positive Relations / Judicial Proceedings in Indonesia / UN Secretary General to Send Commission of Experts to the Countries / Establishment of Truth and Friendship Commission / FM Discussions with Annan  
Consulate Surabaya Closing / Precautionary Measure Against Possible Threats / Travel Warning / Warden Message

#### IRAQ

Encourage Countries to Contribute Support for Iraq  
Attack in Mosul / Civilian Contractors Killed and Injured  
Suppressing Insurgents / Support of Election  
Release of Two Journalists / U.S. Not Involved in Release

#### IRAN

Concerns of Iranian Nuclear Behavior / Stopping of Nuclear Weapons-Terrorists-Sabotaging Peace Process-Violating Human Rights  
EU Permits in Accord / Stopping of Enrichment Activity

#### LIBYA/SAUDI ARABIA

Departure of Ambassadors / Matter Between Nations  
Libyan Plot to Assassinate Crown Prince Abdullah / A/S Burn Meeting with Libyan Officials / Terrorism Sponsor List  
Escrow Renewal for Pan Am 103  
Progress on Relations with Libya

#### ISRAEL/PALESTINIANS

U.S. Support for London Meeting on Palestinian Reform / Welcome and Timely Initiative / No Plans on Who Will Attend

## MISCELLANEOUS

Food Aid Assistance Around the World / Important Part of U.S. Assistance and Development Policy / No Plans to Cut Food Aid / Increased Base of Money for Food Assistance / Supplemental Appropriations / Ethiopia Development Assistance

## TAIWAN

Deputy Secretary Armitage Remarks / Restatement of U.S. Policy in Familiar Terms

## TRANSCRIPT:

12:50 p.m. EST

**MR. BOUCHER:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I don't have any statements or announcements for you today, so I'd be glad to take your questions.

**QUESTION:** We were looking for the meeting the Secretary had with the Indonesian Foreign Minister. There are several issues. One is an American mining company acknowledging that it emitted mercury into the atmosphere, another is a report of expectations of violence and a bolstering of security, and then there is the whole human rights problem emanating from East Timor, those days, Indonesia not doing enough to improve the human rights situation.

Can we take them one at a time? I just want to give you an idea. There are several things.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Why don't I take them all together, if I can.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**MR. BOUCHER:** The meeting today was a joint meeting with the Secretary, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Foreign Minister Wirajuda, and the East Timor Foreign Minister, Jose Ramos Horta. What the principal focus of discussion was this morning, was -- let's start the sentence with a noun.

The principal focus of the discussion this morning was the way in which to follow up and make sure that we find the truth and reach closure on the crimes against humanity that occurred in 1999. There was not any particular discussion of other issues, like the ones you raised that are out in the news today because it was a trilateral meeting and it had a focus. There was some brief discussion during the meeting about how relations are going, how things are going in Indonesia with the new government, some discussion about our relations and how things are going in East Timor.

The Secretary, of course, expressed his strong support and his pleasure that we have had such a positive development in our relations with Indonesia, as well as with East Timor, and to express our pride in having been part of the birth of East Timor and what it's achieved so far. But the principal focus of the discussion was on this issue of the -- the truth and how to get to it, about 1999.

**QUESTION:** Well, the UN Security Council, I guess maybe last month, expressed concern, what was called Indonesia's failure to punish those responsible for the violence that followed East Timor's vote for independence. Is the U.S. dissatisfied

with Indonesia's behavior? I know you're forward-looking, [inaudible].

**MR. BOUCHER:** We've expressed our views in the past about some of the judicial proceedings in Indonesia and our hopes that those would, in fact, result in concrete results and necessary accountability for the crimes that occurred. Our view at this point remains that that is a good thing but there are other elements going on, and the principal discussion today was about two things and how they can be coordinated.

One is the UN Secretary General has taken an initiative to produce -- to send a commission of experts to both countries, East Timor and Indonesia, to evaluate the accountability process and to look at next steps. We think that's a worthwhile initiative. We have supported it and continue to support it.

The second is that the Indonesian and the people from Timor Leste have agreed to establish a Truth and Friendship Commission which would jointly explore together, as two democratic governments, how to find the truth, how to reach closure, how to put these incidents behind them.

And so what we discussed today was how to coordinate those two processes, one of the UN commission of experts and the second is their own bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission. And we certainly think both initiatives are valuable. We have supported the commission of experts and continue to, and we agree that we need to coordinate their efforts, and that's how -- that's some of the things we discussed today.

There's no final decision on how to coordinate them. The Indonesian and Timor Leste Foreign Ministers have been up in New York talking with Kofi Annan, the Secretary General, about the same things. And we'll work with the UN, we'll work with them, to ensure the coordination and make sure that both of these processes can contribute to finding the truth and reaching closure.

**QUESTION:** One last quick thing. You used the adjective "democratic." Is that a self-description of Indonesia and/or is it also a description the U.S. would apply to Indonesia's government?

**MR. BOUCHER:** That's a description we have and would continue to apply to Indonesia's government.

**QUESTION:** Can you say why the consulate in Surabaya is closed through the New Year?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The consulate in Surabaya is closed through the end of the year, closed to the public until after the Christmas and New Year's holiday. This is a precautionary measure. I think as you saw the other day, we -- our Embassy put out a Warden message saying that we do continue to receive information that terrorists are planning attacks against a wide variety of targets in Indonesia, that these targets are potentially Western-associated targets and places of interest.

We have reminded people through the Travel Warning, as well as through the Warden message, that that threat exists, particularly at the holiday season now in Indonesia, and the closure of the consulate is a precautionary measure to make sure that during this period of somewhat increased concern that they're able to review and implement whatever security measures are appropriate to reopen in the new year.

**QUESTION:** So, I mean, you've continued to receive threats, as you said, but are these --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Continue to receive reports and information about threats.

**QUESTION:** Specific to Surabaya or in the whole country, is there --

**MR. BOUCHER:** We have seen a variety of pieces of information related to Western -- you know, possible threats against targets, a wide variety of targets in Indonesia, including Western interests throughout the country.

**QUESTION:** [Inaudible] any specific threat information from the consulate?

**MR. BOUCHER:** My understanding is the information is not specific to the consulate in Surabaya. But it certainly is information that leads us to have concerns about all -- about our facilities. And therefore, we look at their security and take appropriate measures to make sure that they are safe.

**QUESTION:** Richard, a follow-up on the meeting there. Is there any concern expressed at all that the formation of the Indonesian Timor Commission could undercut the more independent efforts by the UN to find out what happened and to arrive at some sort of conclusion?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I think we have seen both these things as valuable, and they just need to be coordinated, so, theoretically, yes. But I think our view is that working it together with the UN and with them we can coordinate these things.

**QUESTION:** The Indonesian -- I'm sorry -- the Timor Foreign Minister suggested that this might make the UN initiative redundant. Do you see that as a possibility?

**MR. BOUCHER:** We see both as valuable efforts.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Said.

**QUESTION:** Richard, yeah, on Indonesia versus Iraq, could you tell us what is the rationale behind not asking Indonesia to send in troops to Iraq? It's a big country. It has a large army, large forces. Or, have you asked them and they said no?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The history of other countries sending troops to Iraq, as you know, is long and sometimes complicated.

**QUESTION:** Right.

**MR. BOUCHER:** The Iraqis have certainly appealed to a lot of different countries to help support them in different ways. Different countries have been prepared to act or not to act, and I think for each country, it has a different concern or set of considerations. We know that many countries have responded and are in Iraq with us. The coalition still numbers around 30. I'm not sure, a few less, a few more at this point. But as far as any individual nation, as you know, there are

general statements and UN resolutions that encourage countries to contribute. The Iraqis have made approaches to many specific countries. It's come up in our discussions with other governments. But decisions are made by individual nations based on their own considerations.

**QUESTION:** But you haven't made any particular requests to Indonesia to --

**MR. BOUCHER:** We have not tried to single out particular countries or provide a list.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** Can we stay on Iraq?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** What effect, if any, does the attack in Mosul have on the State Department's efforts to help the Iraqis prepare for the January elections?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The attack on Mosul is obviously a terrible tragedy and it comes at a very difficult time. I have great sympathy for the families of those killed and injured in this attack, and there were U.S. citizens, military people, there were contractors, there were Iraqis killed and wounded in this attack, and our hearts go out to all their families.

The question of political implications, I think, has been answered pretty clearly by the President, by Prime Minister Blair. The fact is we know there are people who are trying to attack us, who are trying to attack the Iraqi Government, who are trying to attack the Iraqi efforts to build a democratic society and a democratic state to have elections. We need to defeat them. We need to stop them. We will do that using military force, using political progress, using economic progress and renewed determination to make sure the election offers a real opportunity for Iraqis to control their own nation and their own destiny. The fact is these forces of hatred are the forces of the past, are the people that are trying to drag Iraq back into some past of Saddam Hussein, or even worse, and we can't let that happen.

**QUESTION:** Richard, one of the major contractors, Contract International, just announced that it was going to be pulling out because security costs are too high for them. Are you worried that if security continues to unravel in horrible security, that some of the contractors will continue to pull out and this could affect the kind of hope that Iraqis have in terms of rebuilding their country?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know what the specific financial considerations were in this case so I wouldn't draw any general conclusions from it at this point.

**QUESTION:** Well, do you have anything to say about this particular contractor pulling out?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any information on the precise nature of what caused the explosion there? There are some reports -- there's at least one report out today that it was a suicide bomber.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I've seen a variety of reports. But, no, we're not doing the investigation. I wouldn't be able to have anything on that to share with you.

Tammy.

**QUESTION:** Could you give us your latest information on civilian casualties from the attack?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Our information -- I guess this is today's information and I can't say it's definitive -- but our information is that four U.S. citizen civilian contractors were killed in the attack on the dining hall in Mosul yesterday, that there were six U.S. citizen civilian contractors injured. Two of those six sustained serious injuries and we are working with the contracting company to coordinate notification of the families -- with the families and to provide any possible assistance.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible)?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I assume so, based on the way this is written.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** The U.S. and Iran -- allegations U.S. and Israeli spying -- have you got anything to say about that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No.

**QUESTION:** Also on Iran, yesterday there was report suggesting that the United States was -- there was an Iranian official quoted as saying that the United States was seeking direct bilateral talks with the Iranians about their nuclear program and possibly other things. Do you know of anything to substantiate that? Are you reaching out in any way for the --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know of anything that would lead someone to that conclusion. We have certainly made clear our concerns about Iranian behavior. We have made clear our support for the European Union effort to get them to suspend and stop their nuclear enrichment activities and programs that raise concerns about their development of nuclear weapons.

We have made clear how serious our concerns on these and other issues -- we're looking for Iran to do something. There is no reason to focus on the particular issue of whether we're talking or not. There's plenty of opportunity for them to do things and we look for them to do things.

**QUESTION:** But Richard, are you --

**QUESTION:** One --

**QUESTION:** Sorry. Sorry.

**QUESTION:** I just had one quick follow-up on that. When the United States, Libya and Great Britain began talking about eliminating Libya's nuclear weapons capability and other WMD programs, the circle of people who actually knew about

that was extremely small. Do you have any reason to believe -- are your checks -- have your checks been sufficiently high and low that you can rule that out?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thanks.

**QUESTION:** Are you -- Richard, are you looking to take a more active role in the EU negotiations?

**MR. BOUCHER:** We're not looking for anything other than to see the Iranians stop developing nuclear weapons, stop supporting terrorists, stop trying to sabotage the peace process and stop violating human rights.

**QUESTION:** Well, do you think you can affect their decisions on whether to do that if you took a more active role in the negotiations?

**MR. BOUCHER:** They can do that any time they want to. They've, unfortunately, pursued those courses when we've talked to them; they have pursued those courses when we haven't talked to them. It's not a decision that rests in our hands.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

(Laughter.)

**MR. BOUCHER:** Oh, yeah. Come on. Let's cut off *The New York Times*. I'm all for that.

**QUESTION:** I saw no hands.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Thanks, Teri.

**QUESTION:** Go ahead, sir.

**QUESTION:** It was just a finger.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'm with her.

**QUESTION:** I was just thanking you for that one answer, Richard.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I see.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** There was a report yesterday that Iran had construed the agreement with the EU-3 to permit conversion of the 37 metric tons of yellowcake into a stage that was some kind of intermediate stage before they went to the final stage of --

that goes to the centrifuges. I'm sorry I don't know the technical terms. And there seemed to be some disagreement about whether this was permitted by the accord with the Europeans. Do you know anything about that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** It's -- no. The quick answer is no, nothing definitive on what is permitted by their accords. This was a report yesterday, which indicated they were moving, I think, enrichment to UF4 --

**QUESTION:** UF4. I think that's right.

**MR. BOUCHER:** -- or where the, which is what you do before you go to UF6.

The point I would make about it, though, I mean, you have all these reports coming out, part of a continuous stream of reports that raise questions about what the Iranian intentions are. If they are committed to the kind of agreement that they signed with the Europeans, if they are committed to reassuring the international community that they are not going to develop a nuclear weapon, which is what they keep saying, you have to wonder why they continue to undertake activities that raise these kinds of questions about their intentions, why they seem to be looking for every opportunity to move forward in the direction that nobody wants them to go.

So I can't tell you specifically if this is, you know, a batch that was permitted by the EU agreement or not, but I think it does justify a certain level of skepticism about whether they've changed their intentions and whether they're really willing to abide by the ultimate results of that agreement.

**QUESTION:** Well, if what they're doing is permitted by the agreement, shouldn't the skepticism be directed at the agreement and not at the Iranian intentions?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't think that's necessarily the conclusion one has to draw. Certainly, you can ask the Europeans and people can debate whether the agreement was full enough, tight enough or whatever. We've supported the effort because the basic thrust of the effort is to get the Iranians to agree to suspend all their enrichment activity and to ultimately cease. That is what we have supported. That's what we want to see. That, we think, is in Iranian interest to reassure the international community that they're not going to develop a nuclear weapon.

So I think, in the end, the burden falls more on the Iranians than it does on the Europeans or anybody else to demonstrate to the world, to reassure the world through transparency, through openness and through a cessation of activities like these that are reported, that they are truly intending to -- not to develop a nuclear weapons.

**QUESTION:** Openness is one thing and cessation is another. I mean, you've got to agree there's enough ambiguity in various processes that could have civilian application entirely and be totally energy-producing necessities for the country. If you were taken literally, they would have to cease everything that is ambiguous, everything that could be in some way construed as having applicability to a nuclear weapons program. That's asking a lot, no?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The international community, through the IAEA Board of Governors, through the efforts of the Europeans, through the conditions the Russians have laid down on supply of fuel and making sure they take back all the fuel that's provided, has made very, very clear that Iranian enrichment activity raises concerns everywhere about what the Iranians are up to. We have said very clearly we believe it's a sign it is not necessary and that the enrichment activity that we know about is a clear sign that they intend to develop a nuclear weapon. Others, through their actions, through

their negotiations, have shown clearly they don't think -- they do think that Iranian enrichment activity raises these concerns.

If Iran is truly not intending to develop a weapon, one would think that Iran would make every effort to show that they're not and to stop all this enrichment activity.

**QUESTION:** Why don't you have definitive information on whether this particular activity, if it is going on, is or is not permitted? You often have told us that the Europeans brief you in detail about their agreement. Are they holding back on some aspect of it that leads you to not have definitive information, or is it just ambiguous --

**MR. BOUCHER:** No, I don't think so. I don't know if we've asked that particular question or examined that particular --

**QUESTION:** May I finish the question? Can I finish the question?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Sure.

**QUESTION:** Or have you read the agreement and understand it thoroughly and it is, in fact, ambiguous and therefore you don't have a definitive --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I am not trying to make a judgment about the Europeans' agreement. I think it's for them to tell you what it involves, what it doesn't involve. It's for them to tell us what it involves and what it doesn't involve. I'm just not trying to put myself in the position of making legal interpretation of their agreements.

**QUESTION:** Change of subject? We have the two French journalists that were released in Iraq, which is a very welcome thing, but there has been speculation swirling what sort of deal that the French Government might have been involved in making. Has there been any concern or any inquiries to ask exactly how this happened?

**MR. BOUCHER:** First, let me make clear we're very pleased to see that the two journalists have been released. We strongly condemn the taking of hostages, and particularly these two hostages, as we do in all cases involving hostage-taking and acts of terror.

As far as what the conditions were of the release, we weren't involved in the negotiations or the discussions and you'd have to check with the French Government.

**QUESTION:** Are you making inquiries as to what the conditions --?

**MR. BOUCHER:** As I said, we weren't involved and you would have to check with the French Government.

Arshad.

**QUESTION:** But on Libya, as I know you're aware, the Saudis have recalled their Ambassador to Tripoli and have said that they're going to ask the Libyan Ambassador in Saudi Arabia to depart. Do you have any comment on that? And all over the alleged plot to -- Libyan plot to kill Crown Prince Abdullah. Do you have any comment on those steps, in particular, one?

And two, it's now nearly three months since Secretary Powell met the Libyan Foreign Minister at UNGA. Have you yet gotten any credible, persuasive explanation from Libya as to whether there was such a plot and whether they had any involvement whatsoever in it?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Let me try to remember all the pieces. The first part, Libya-Saudi Arabia ambassadors -- No. The question of diplomatic relationships and how they conduct is really a matter for those two nations, and I don't think it's something we can get into at this point.

The issue of the Libyan involvement in plots to assassinate Crown Prince Abdullah is an issue that we have taken seriously, that we have raised repeatedly, as you know, with the Libyan Government. It's one that we do think needs to be explored and explained and we have continued to explore with the Libyan Government.

Assistant Secretary Burns met with Libyan officials -- about two weeks ago now? -- in Rome -- and it remains a subject of continuing discussion. As far as the quality or credibility of the explanations that we have received, I think I'd only say that the Libyans have provided us with some explanation not sufficient for us, or any others, to reach a definitive judgment on the matter at this point.

I would point out as well that Libya has told us, has said in December 2003 that it does not support the use of violence to settle political differences between states. And we continue to make clear to the Libyans that we expect them to stick by that commitment.

**QUESTION:** Is this -- would you say that this issue is kind of stopping you from moving forward with the Libyans? Would you say this is like the main, remaining issue to resolve?

**MR. BOUCHER:** There are number of issues that need to be taken up with the Libyans, but I suppose the main one people are looking at now is when and how and if we can take them off the Terrorism Sponsors list. And we do, I think, report to you regularly that they have done -- taken significant steps to repudiate their past support for terrorism. But we have also made clear that we need to see this pledge to avoid the use of violence for political ends sustained, carried out and effectively. And so that is a matter that continues to impinge upon the decision.

**QUESTION:** A decision to remove them from the terrorism list or to normalize relations?

**MR. BOUCHER:** The terrorism decision, specifically.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Change of subject.

**QUESTION:** One more on Libya.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Is there not a Pan Am 103 deadline pending?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Frankly, I don't remember. I don't remember what happened with the last escrow renewal and what the date was. You'd have to check that with the families, I think. There always -- there has been, but we had a, I think, an extension last time, but I don't remember how long it was.

**QUESTION:** To the extent that it's between the lawyers this time.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Okay, on the Middle East. Prime Minister Blair announced --

**QUESTION:** Just on Libya --

**QUESTION:** I'm sorry.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Said.

**QUESTION:** If it is proven that, in fact, Libya is involved in the assassination plot, is that likely to impact the relations with the United States (inaudible)?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I would say that the reports and the information has already impacted the speed at which we can move forward with Libya and will continue to until it's cleared up.

**QUESTION:** But, you know, looking at what the Libyans are saying, they're saying that relations with the United States are improving. They're -- you know, they're bragging about it. They're --

**MR. BOUCHER:** Well, we've made an awful lot of progress, and indeed we're doing things with Libya that we weren't doing a year or two ago. The Libyans' decision to get rid of its weapons of mass destruction was a major step forward for Libya's role in the international community and for our ability to do things with them. But there are many aspects to this growing relationship and some of them are certainly hampered by these reports and the fact that we haven't gotten to the bottom of it yet.

**QUESTION:** Can I ask one last one on Libya? Do they -- their December 2000 --December 2003 they pledged to not use violence to settle political disputes. Do they repeat that to you when you talk to them about it or have they ceased to say, yes, we will stick with that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Frankly, I don't know. I think it is something that they have made a matter of policy, and as far as I know it remains their stated policy.

**QUESTION:** On the Middle East?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Yeah, okay. Go.

**QUESTION:** Prime Minister Blair has formally unveiled today his plans for a conference next year on Palestinian

development toward statehood. President Bush has welcomed it. But have we seen -- is the United States going to be actively engaged in preparing for this and attending this? Officials with Blair were saying that Dr. Rice might be attending.

**MR. BOUCHER:** I can't give you a definitive answer yet on who might attend. What I can tell you is, as the President has said, as the Secretary has said, we support the meeting; we support the British initiative to hold the meeting in London to focus on the issue of Palestinian reform. I think Prime Minister Blair has talked about, as a follow-on to the Palestinian election, having a meeting that would help support the sort of building of institutions, reform on the economic, political and security side, and all those are important topics on the agenda.

President Bush has talked specifically about how progress towards a democratic Palestinian state, progress towards building the institutions of a democratic Palestinian state, is a key part of moving forward on the peace process, on the roadmap and on settlement of differences between Israelis and Palestinians. And so this is a welcome and a timely initiative. We look forward to working with the British Government on it. We look forward to working with them and with the Palestinians and others on the process of reform that it's designed to address. But exactly who would go and when and a few details like that, I think we still need to hear more from the British Government about how they want to arrange it and talk to them more about how we can help.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHER:** David. We've got three more, I think.

**QUESTION:** Can you address a report on the possibility that the Administration is making cuts in food aid?

**MR. BOUCHER:** Let me start with a simple answer. The simple answer is no. The food aid is still a very important part of the U. S. assistance and development policy. Right now we recognize our food aid is helping people and saving lives in emergency situations and other situations around the world and is a key contributor to development.

There are no plans to eliminate or to cut U.S. food aid. There are -- there is increased demand for food aid. There are sort of budgetary factors that come and go that determine at any given moment what's being allocated and what's not. Over the last three or four years we have significantly increased the base of money for food assistance, which is about, I think, \$1.2 billion a year, up from something around 800,000.

**QUESTION:** Million.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Eight-hundred million -- excuse me. During previous years, some of the previous years, there have been supplemental appropriations for specific emergencies. There have been special money, reimbursements, things that like that helped contributed to larger amounts. But we've built up the base. We've been continuing a sustained program of food assistance. We're at a moment now in this year where we just got our appropriation.

Generally, what we do is in the early part of the year we give -- we allocate to emergency situations which are the most immediate, most important, because we want to make sure we have enough food for emergency situations, and we're now at the point in the year when we're going to start allocating because we have our budget to some of the more developmental ongoing project kind of things.

Second of all, as I noted, in previous years we have gotten supplemental funding for emergencies or unforeseen events. I can't tell you at this point whether that will happen this year or not. But there is no intention on our part to cut food aid and there's every intention on our part to continue food aid for emergencies and for the developmental needs of many nations around the world.

Yeah, sure.

**QUESTION:** I think there's a Columbia University study or a professor at Columbia University that addressed this very issue and cited Ethiopia, for example, and the famine issue. And he says although \$500 million were given, a lot of that money was spent on serving the aid. That's one. And secondly, he cites that only \$4 million went to agricultural program to improving production and to teach people how to do agriculture and so on. Would you comment on that?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't have the numbers on Ethiopia available to me. Obviously, the first thing you want to do is feed people who are hungry. It doesn't do you any good to have the food if you can't get it to them. It doesn't do you any good to have the food if it sits in the port and doesn't get delivered and distributed. So every food program needs to have the ability to deliver food to people who need it.

And there are additional costs beyond the food that are associated with that and they probably vary from nation to nation and situation to situation. So I don't have the exact numbers on Ethiopia. But I'm sure there are -- you know, there are always issues like that, how the money comes together.

On the issue of development assistance for Ethiopia, if I remember correctly, two or three years ago, there was a supplemental for emergency assistance because of famine and drought. Development assistance is an ongoing thing and one wants to always support those programs. And I think those numbers are widely available on the web and elsewhere, and you can get them there as far as how much we spend every year on development in Ethiopia.

Arshad.

**QUESTION:** A real quick one on food aid. It seems like we end up this time of year most years. Have you made any decision on how much, if any, food aid you're going to give to North Korea next year?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I'm not aware of anything on that yet, no.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHER:** No. Okay, two in the back.

Sir. Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Taiwan is somewhat upset about Deputy Secretary Armitage's remarks on Taiwan in which he characterized Taiwan as a landmine. And Taiwan is seeking clarifications for his remarks, too. Are you talking with Taiwanese officials

over this?

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't know if there have been any discussions on it. I'm sure if they asked, we would tell them that all he's done is restate U.S. policy in very familiar terms. We all know that Taiwan is an important issue to many countries, to us. And it's an issue that comes up in not only our bilateral relationship with China, but in the region as well. So we -- it's an issue that we spend a lot of time working on and we try to help people move towards a peaceful dialogue and a peaceful resolution of the issues.

**QUESTION:** Yes, and a related one. Are you keeping on talking with China on its plan for anti-secession law and --

**MR. BOUCHER:** I don't have any new news, but yeah, it does remain a subject of discussion with the Chinese.

Yeah. Okay.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Sir.

**QUESTION:** Last week, five Turkish security diplomats were killed in Mosul while they were going to Baghdad, and President Bush and Prime Minister Erdogan talked about this issue yesterday. Is there any new information about investigation of this matter?

**MR. BOUCHER:** No. I do not have any new information on that.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHER:** Okay. Thank you.

(The briefing ended at 1:20 p.m.)  
DPB # 210

Released on December 22, 2004

 [BACK TO TOP](#)



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