

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. email	Eric Schwartz to Colby Cooper, Danielf Feldman, Matthew McLean et al. Subject: Cable. [Probable duplicate of vz5266_007] (17 pages)	05/13/2000	P1/b(1)
002. email	Jonathan Vaccaro to Eric Schwartz. Subject: RE: Cable. [Probable duplicate of vz5266_007] (14 pages)	05/13/2000	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
NSC Emails
Exchange-Record (Sept 97-Jan 01) ([Special Envoy])
OA/Box Number: 620000

FOLDER TITLE:

[05/13/2000-05/17/2000]

2014-0927-F

vz5286

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
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Exchange Mail

DATE-TIME 05/15/2000 6:14:03 PM

FROM Wozniak, Natalie S. (PRESS)

CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT State Department Press Briefing -- May 15, 2000 [UNCLASSIFIED]

TO Anderson, Brooke D. (NSCCOMM)
Brown, Katherine A. (PRESS/INTERN)
Crowley, Philip J. (PRESS)
Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
Hammer, Michael A. (PRESS)
Hoelzer, Jennifer I. (PRESS/INTERN)
Stockwell, David B. (PRESS)
Wozniak, Natalie S. (PRESS)
Aragoncillo, Leandro A. (VP)
Babbitt, James F. (VP)
Beardsley, Tyler S. (VP)
Black, Steven K. (VP)
Bolan, Christopher J. (VP)
Davidson, Leslie K. (VP)
Dennett, Todd H. (VP)
Fuerth, Leon S. (VP)
Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
Hinckley, Steedman (VP)
Orfini, Michael H. (VP)
Osius, Theodore G. (VP)
Roberts, Michael W. (VP)
Saunders, Richard M. (VP)
Woolston, Ann E. (VP)

CARBON_COPY**TEXT_BODY****TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT**

dpb # 44 May 15.doc
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Daily Press Briefing Index
Monday, May 15, 2000

Briefer: Richard Boucher, Spokesman

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPB # 44

MONDAY, MAY 15, 2000 12:35 P.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. BOUCHER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I realize I'm a little bit late, but let's see if we can all answer our questions and go see the Secretary and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, if we want to talk about that.

The only thing I'll mention is that we are going to have a second visit in Korea to Kumchang-ni, the underground construction site that we visited last May. The second US visit to the site will begin on May 23rd. The purpose of the second visit is to follow up and confirm the work of the first visit.

With that, I'll take your questions about this or anything else.

Q Can I ask about that?

MR. BOUCHER: Yes.

Q When they went a year ago -- I'm talking about the inspectors -- I know you don't like that word, but let's call them, for our purposes, inspectors -- they didn't find anything. Have you learned anything over the past year to suggest that this situation has changed at all?

MR. BOUCHER: I think this visit is being held as a follow-up to reconfirm those

findings. So I would just say that last year we did find there was nothing that leads to the conclusion that there was a violation of the Agreed Framework.. That's still our understanding but we want to make sure that we can follow up and reconfirm that assessment.

Q The disorders in Israel. There are several things but, first, the routine question. Any Americans hurt? Any American property damaged, that you know of?

MR. BOUCHER: The disorders in the West Bank, right?

Q (Inaudible) yes.

MR. BOUCHER: No, not that we're aware of, I guess I'd have to say at this point. I don't have any information on that.

Q They seem to be rather large scale. Does this say anything to the US about an impact on the negotiations you're supervising, and does it say anything about -- because it seems to be coincident with Israel's independence, does it suggest anything about the Palestinians being unwilling to accept Israel, even after all your hard work?

MR. BOUCHER: I think, first of all, we are concerned about the violence, and particularly regret the loss of life, but the parties themselves are committed to a serious effort at the negotiating table. We're talking to both sides about the importance of doing everything they can to create the right environment for negotiations, but it's clear the people of Israel want peace. There's a strong basis of support to pursue the peace. Prime Minister Barak has made clear that there is a historic opportunity now, and it's clear that he's prepared to make the tough decisions.

Similarly, Yasser Arafat has obviously faced some difficulties, but it's our view that he is also prepared to pursue peace and take the historic

decisions
necessary to end the conflict.

So you have the leadership on both sides clearly committed to this,
and we look
to them to build the peace and change the environment.

Q Are these events saying anything to the State Department and their
optimism
about Arafat's ability or willingness to control Palestinian disorders?

MR. BOUCHER: Again, there is obviously difficulties in doing that,
but the
commitment to peace we think is clear and that they're making a
serious effort.
And we need to pursue the peace and not be swayed or deterred by
violence.

Q The deadlines passed this weekend - the 13th?

MR. BOUCHER: One of the non-deadlines.

Q Yeah, well, tell me what is the significance of that?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, this was not seen as a deadline. You know,
there was a
desire to get a framework agreement by May 13th, but clearly it was
not a hard
and fast deadline, and certainly not a moment to stop negotiating
because a date
passes. So the interest that we have is in continuing to work with the
parties
and to make -- in their serious effort to try to get the peace and we will
continue to do that.

Q What is the deadline, goal, whatever now? And what are the
Secretary's travel
plans?

MR. BOUCHER: The deadline, goal, whatever now is to get a final
status agreement
by September 13th. And along the way to that, there were certain
ideas and dates
and prospects of doing things, certain things by certain dates. But in
the end,
the point is to get to that final status agreement.

Q Is the Secretary planning any personal engagement in this issue?

MR. BOUCHER: Still, as we've reported before, she's considering the possibility of a trip out there, probably will make a trip, but there's no date set.

Q Yes, does the United States take a position on the Lebanese claim to the Shebaa farms?

MR. BOUCHER: I think I have to say that's an issue that's under -- has to be under discussion by the parties. Let me double check and see if there's anything additional to say on that. I'm not going to take a position on the particular farms.

Q What are we talking about?

MR. BOUCHER: Is that it?

Q I don't know. I'm just a little surprised because it's been quite an issue in the last few days.

MR. BOUCHER: Yes, it has. Let me double check and get you something more definitive. But it may be a definitive, no, I don't have anything to say on that.

Q Let's do another territorial question. The Israelis apparently have decided to yield these three villages near Jerusalem. Does that please the State Department, which seems to want Israel to give up territory? And do you think it's sufficient to deal with the Jerusalem issue, which you probably don't think it is?

MR. BOUCHER: As you know, Barry, Jerusalem is a final status issue and that's an issue to be handled in the negotiations. As for this particular step, we of course welcome it as part of the implementation, the understandings and the agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians. I think Prime Minister Barak has also described it as a downpayment on the third tranche, the third set of redeployments. So that's welcome in that regard.

Q When you speak favorably of Barak and our decisions, have you --
has the State
Department said anything about the way he's addressing these pieces
of land now
being more inclined to surrender contiguous pieces, parcels of land,
and more
resembling an entity than was originally the case?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't think I want to make broad characterizations
of individual
leaders.

Q Not him, his --

MR. BOUCHER: No, his government. But, I mean, obviously, we
welcome steps to
implement agreements, we welcome the serious efforts that he's
putting forward
and the serious effort that is being put forward on both sides.

Q Does the United States have a position on the fate of the SLA and
their
families in the face of the Israeli withdrawal?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't - I think that's the kind of detail we really
can't get
into at this stage. We support the idea of withdrawal consistent with
United
Nations resolutions. We think all parties should work with the United
Nations.

Q I want to follow on that. You're doing more than that. I mean,
you're
offering all sorts of tangible and intangible assistance and you could
say it's
hypothetical because they haven't withdrawn yet. But these people
who have
helped to maintain the security zone for Israel inside Lebanon are
being
threatened with treason trials, and whether or not there would be a
trial. Is
there anything that the US Government thinks ought to be done by
outsiders to
protect these people?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't -- Barry, I'm afraid at this point I'm not able
to get
into specific aspects of the Israeli withdrawal. The point is that Israel
has

announced this, has agreed to do this consistent with the UN resolutions. We've urged the United Nations and others to work closely -- well, the Israelis to work closely with the United Nations, and others to do so as well.

Q Has she the phones on this latest burst of the disorder -- the Secretary - that you know of?

MR. BOUCHER: I'll have to double check that, if I can. I know she has been in touch with our Middle East negotiators, obviously.

Q Excuse me, I mean, it's so hard to keep track of the Dennis Ross peace bandwagon. Is he back there now?

MR. BOUCHER: The Dennis Ross report.

Q It's a separate section.

MR. BOUCHER: Dennis left Washington yesterday and arrives in Israel today, Special Middle East negotiator. He'll be meeting there with Israeli and Palestinian officials and returning to Washington at the end of the week.

Q It appears that both Beijing and the new government in Taipei would like to US to play --

Q Is this on the Middle East still?

MR. BOUCHER: Let's finish with --okay, we'll finish with the Middle East and come back.

Q Several news services are quoting the chief Palestinian negotiator as quitting because of the secret back channel going on in Stockholm, which is undermining him. What can you say about that?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, we've seen these reports. We do have a great deal of respect for Yasser Abd Rabbo, and we hope that he'll continue to be part of the negotiations.

Q Well, leave Stockholm out if that is a problem for you. There has never been any reluctance that I know of to use every effort, every channel, every means at your disposal, to get something done that you think is worth doing. Are you willing to exclude or confirm that other channels are being used to try to get this problem resolved?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I'm not willing to exclude or confirm, but I would say that over the last several years we have been involved in helping the Israelis and Palestinians work through a variety of interim and permanent status issues. We've been involved in a variety of ways in helping the parties do that, and we'll continue to meet with both sides in order to move the process forward.

Q Have you heard anything new from the FBI on the allegations of the other day at the House hearing?

MR. BOUCHER: No. Now, we had another other question.

Q Just to clarify though, then, is there no evidence then that there have been any reporters using press credentials who the FBI would classify as intelligence agents?

MR. BOUCHER: I made quite clear on Friday we have no information to that effect, and the FBI has told us if they did have it they would have told us.

Q So your request for a fuller clarification from the FBI that I imagine were made after our request for you to do so haven't been answered yet, or they were never made in the first place?

MR. BOUCHER: We don't have an answer at this point, Matt.

Q Was there a request made by the Department to the FBI to try and clear up the

--

MR. BOUCHER: I said on Friday that we had asked already.

Q And there hasn't been a response?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have any new information from them, no.

Okay, we did have a question back here on another topic.

Q On the same subject.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay.

Q I have a point of information and a point of clarification. The other day, you said, you know, the press members that confined to the first floor and second floor, not beyond. My question is there is a library on the third floor. Is that also off limits as far as the press is concerned?

MR. BOUCHER: As far as I know, you would have to be escorted to go up there, yes.

Q To go up to the library?

MR. BOUCHER: Yes.

Q Okay.

Q (Inaudible) - associate yourself formally, or did the Secretary, with the remarks of Mr. Carpenter that he would like to have the press not in the building, left to his own preferences?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't think that's necessary, Roy. I think we have some quite clear statements by the Secretary of State herself that she sees a value to having the press in the building and that there is no question about that. She has made that quite clear. Obviously, she will weigh any recommendations for better security with her strong desire to achieve a professional level of security here on behalf of everyone and find a way to do that in a manner that's consistent with the need to work with the press as well as others.

Q Does Mr. Carpenter's statement have any validity, then? I mean, he made it before the House Oversight Committee, which is not a minor body of the Congress, and he seemed to be expressing his own preference. I mean, I just want to know if that's just his personal opinion and whether a top State Department official goes to the Hill and gives a personal opinion about something that relates to the functioning of the building.

MR. BOUCHER: Roy, I don't want to blow one particular remark out of proportion. The fact is, you have heard on this subject from the Secretary of State herself. Her job is to balance all the different considerations that we have in this building, and I'm sure she'll continue to do that.

Q She said she didn't believe that anybody should "go crazy" over this issue. So that's the one remark I can associate of hers with Mr. Carpenter. Is that what you want us to do?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I wouldn't do that. I would rather look at what she said about the need to work with foreigners, including the foreign press, in this building, as well as her desire to achieve a professional level of security.

Okay, we had a China-Taiwan question?

Q Yes, I was referring to The Washington Post article on Saturday, which said that both Beijing and the incoming government of Taiwan would like the US to play a more active role in helping to improve relations across the Taiwan Strait. I would like your comments, please.

MR. BOUCHER: I think it is important to make clear, as we have before, that these are matters for people on both sides of the Strait to resolve. Our longstanding policy has been based on three pillars, one China, peaceful resolution of differences, and a support for cross-Strait dialogue. We believe

that cross-Strait dialogue is the best way to resolve these differences peacefully. The United States Government is not mediating and does not seek to mediate between the two sides. That's a longstanding policy. We do believe that each side should pay close attention to what the other is saying and think creatively about how to rebuild cross-Strait dialogue.

Q The US is not mediating, it does not seek to mediate. Has any such recommendation come from either side that the US become more involved than it is?

MR. BOUCHER: We have not been asked to mediate.

Q Are you saying, sir, that that Post article aside, you have not heard from either side that you should perhaps play a more active role?

MR. BOUCHER: We have -- no, that's right.

Q Isn't it a good idea though?

MR. BOUCHER: Isn't it a good idea? I think we've said what we think is a good idea, which is a peaceful dialogue across the straits.

Q Same subject. I didn't quite hear George Gedda's question. If he has asked the question, forgive me.

I just want to know, because according to the Post story, China asked the US to perform the role of mediator. So did Taiwan. Is that true? Or you --

MR. BOUCHER: We don't consider that we've been asked to mediate here and we don't seek that status.

Q What is the US role anyway? Because you mentioned the three pillars. One of the pillars is to encourage cross-Strait dialogue. When you say you encourage, you obviously play some kind of role. Is that the role of a facilitator, as opposed to a mediator?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not going to try to characterize any particular US role, because we obviously have been in very close touch, remain in close

touch with
people on both sides of the straits. And our consistent position has
been and
will continue to be that we urge them to think creatively about how to
establish
a peaceful dialogue and to resolve their differences peacefully that
way.

Q Is the US involved or not involved in that context?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to give you something that you're going
to start
characterizing us. We've made clear our view and make clear our view
all the
time to both sides. We talk about these issues. We have a clear and
consistent
view.

Q Can you expand, perhaps, on your motives for not wishing to
mediate when both
sides apparently would be happy for you to do so? It is slightly
unusual. The
United States is usually very keen -- usually you say, we won't
mediate until
they ask us to. And then now they have asked you to and you aren't
willing to
mediate. What's the thinking behind it exactly? You just don't -- you
just want
to keep out of it; it's too much trouble?

MR. BOUCHER: I think it's always been our view that these issues
are best
solved by a cross-Strait dialogue between the two sides.

Q New subject? Africa, specifically the Horn. I noticed that over the
weekend
you put out this ravel warning for Eritrea, a similar one for Ethiopia,
but the
Eritrean one goes a little bit further in saying that the State
Department has
authorized departure of Embassy personnel in non-emergency
positions. I'm
wondering if you can say how many have taken advantage of this, if
you can; if
such a facility is going to be made available for those members in
Ethiopia as
well, considering the violent demonstrations going on outside the
Embassy there;
and if, in Eritrea, if anyone has taken advantage of this or will take
advantage

of it in Ethiopia, if that's going to have any effect on the famine relief program. Are these AID people who might be leaving?

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, let me double check on the Ethiopia things. These announcements are done in regard to the particular situation in the particular country, geography, proximity to the front. A lot of things like that come into play, so it may not have been necessary to do that. We have certainly warned against travel to Eritrea and suggested that Americans consider deferring travel to Ethiopia.

I don't have numbers yet on people who might have left. Our Embassies are in touch with the American community through Embassy warden systems and informal town meeting gatherings. But I don't have any numbers yet.

As far as the status of famine relief, we're obviously going to continue our efforts to try to bring relief to those who might be victims of famine. We've already pledged a considerable amount of food and we'll continue that effort. I'm not aware that these particular withdrawals would impede that, but obviously it's all made more difficult by the outbreak of fighting.

Q Any mediation activity on that front?

MR. BOUCHER: Our - no. Our --

Q (Inaudible) Holbrooke was doing it the other day.

MR. BOUCHER: This gets into sort of how do you characterize what. We're not mediating this; we're trying to get the parties to follow and Organization for African Unity peace plan. That was the effort that we have supported, that we supported in the talks that we participated in in Algiers. That's the effort that was made by the UN Security Council members when they went out here. The point is try to end the fighting and immediately resume talks without preconditions under the auspices of the Organization for African Unity.

Q I just want to clarify something on Ethiopia. You said, as far as you know, the Ethiopia announcement is the same as it was on the 12th; there hasn't been any additions?

MR. BOUCHER: On the 12th. We have not done a -- no, we have not done another one over the weekend.

Q On the same subject, Richard, or related. You may not have the numbers yet about anyone who's come out. Do you have numbers in general, or could you get them, on how many Americans you believe are in each country?

MR. BOUCHER: I'll have to check on that.

Q Official and nonofficial?

MR. BOUCHER: Okay.

Q It was reported that Nelson Mandela in a speech in South Africa late last week urged Zimbabweans to take up arms against tyranny and it was clear that he was talking about Mugabe. Does the United States have any position on Mr. Mandela's thoughts as he expressed them then?

MR. BOUCHER: I have not seen that and you are referring to reported comments possibly made and I don't think I should venture a guess at this point.

Q How about on the election, the upcoming election in Zimbabwe. Is there anything - does the US have any new concerns considering these reports that are coming out about (inaudible) into Mugabe's party?

MR. BOUCHER: We have certainly felt that it's important that the elections be free and fair. We have supported legal and transparent land reform but we also said we can fund election monitors to ensure that Zimbabwe's political -- the Zimbabweans' political aspirations are met. So we do want to make sure those elections are free and fair.

Q So land reform is still suspended but there will be - the US is going to pay for (inaudible), those types of people?

MR. BOUCHER: We're willing to do that. I'm not exactly sure who it is. I'll have to see.

Q Could I ask whether you have a comment to what Kofi Annan told the New York Times on I guess it was Friday and it appeared in Saturday's paper? He's complaining that the US is too reticent, that they charge too much for their -- the flights that are offered, three times the rates commercial airlines charge, and so forth?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't think I want to get into the charges exactly. I mean, you can check with the Pentagon on exactly how those costs are determined. But, you know, obviously the military is not the low-cost carrier in these kinds of situations.

I think more generally I would have to say that we do work very closely with the Secretary General. We participate as appropriate in a great variety of peacekeeping and UN situations. We give serious consideration to any requests that we get. We also obviously consult with our Congress, we consult with other regional parties who are involved in these situations. And, as you know, there is a general tendency to look for regional solutions to these conflicts and to regional mechanisms for peacekeeping or peacemaking as appropriate.

We do think the UN needs to have a mandate and forces appropriate to the job and we have worked and will continue to work with the UN as we are doing in the Sierra Leone situation to try to make sure that they can be effective.

Q Some of us spoke to Special Envoy Jesse Jackson last Friday, who said some slightly unconventional things about how he saw the situation,

including his view
that essentially the important thing was to get Foday Sankoh back into
the
political process and get him sitting at a table. Well, Charles Taylor,
as well.
Yes.

I wondered whether -- and that he had a positive role to play in the
future of
Sierra Leone. I wondered how does the State Department feel about
the future of
Foday Sankoh? Do you think he has a positive role to play after all
these
events?

MR. BOUCHER: I guess what we would have to say is he has a
chance to play a
positive role, to demonstrate some sincerity by releasing the UN
detainees, by
ordering a cease fire, by reopening the channels of communication to
discuss a
genuine, credible peace process for Sierra Leone. We've made quite
clear that
what we are looking for and what Reverend Jackson will do during his
trip is to
reinforce regional efforts to secure the immediate release of UN
hostages that
are held by the rebels, to restore the cease fire and to return to
implementation
of a credible peace process under the Lome Accords.

Reverend Jackson, by the way, will be visiting Liberia, Guinea, Sierra
Leone,
Mali and Nigeria from May 17 to May 22nd.

Q There are, right now, US and British military people in Nigeria
talking to the
Nigerians about possible intervention. Do you have anything to report
from them?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have anything new on that. We've said
before we had
military planners and logistics people down there to discuss the
possibilities of
Nigeria helping to support the UN effort.

Q But thus far, there has not been a -- the Nigerians haven't actually
made the

--

MR. BOUCHER: I have no news on that, no.

Q Has anybody decided whether the Nigerians would go there under the UN umbrella, fully integrated into UNAMSIL or it hasn't --

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have anything that precise to tell you at this point on Nigeria.

I think we had a question --

Q This is a new subject, so if anyone else -

MR. BOUCHER: Okay.

Q On the provision of the Military Appropriations Bill to be voted on tomorrow demanding the pullout of the US peacekeepers in Kosovo, how hard is the Administration lobbying to defeat that provision and is there going to be an Administration veto if the provision is attached?

MR. BOUCHER: You're sort of asking questions about legislative strategy and vetoes that belong at the White House. I do want to say that we are seriously concerned about this. We are seriously in need of the money for civilian reconstruction. That's why we had a request for a supplemental appropriation and we are seriously concerned we are not getting the money because the civilian construction elements and rebuilding the administration and civil administration in Kosovo remains the exit strategy for US forces.

Q Do we have any guidance on Elian Gonzalez's pediatrician?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't know exactly what you want to know about Elian Gonzalez's pediatrician. But I think the issue of the people extending their stays in the United States once they are already here and how they are informed of their ability to extend their stay is in the hands of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Q Was there any concern that she should not remain here because she

is not
licensed to practice in the United States?

MR. BOUCHER: Again, whether she can remain here or not is a decision in the hands of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It has been true all along, since she arrived, that foreign physicians who are not licensed here are not allowed to practice medicine or dispense prescription drugs in the United States. I think that has been made quite clear.

Q Apparently she accused the State Department of confiscating her medicines. Is that what you're referring to when you said "not authorized to"--

MR. BOUCHER: Well, the rules are clear that a foreign doctor can't practice medicine in the United States or dispense prescription drugs in the United States. The actual, you know, "what do you have with you" questions belong in Customs. They are the ones that handle those issues.

Q Is there any truth to this -- as far as you know --

MR. BOUCHER: You'd have to ask Customs Service about that.

Q She said this morning at Reagan National Airport that the State Department had given her a two-month visa and that when she arrived on US soil the two months went down to two weeks. Do you have anything on that?

MR. BOUCHER: I think, once again, as we have many times in the past had to point out the distinction between getting a visa for whatever period, which allows you to appear at the port of entry and apply for admission. But the actual admission and the length of stay are determined by the Immigration Service at the time of entry. So, I mean, if you have an indefinite visa, it doesn't mean you get indefinite right to remain in the United States; it just means that at any time in the next -- well, now it's 10 years -- you can show up and ask for entry. You won't be allowed to stay for 10 years every time. So there is a

difference
between the visa and the period of entry and the Immigration Service
decides
that, as well as on any renewals of that.

So she came, I believe, with the playmates and their guardians and
was given two
weeks like the others in the party at that time.

Q The same subject. Any movement on visas for the three sets of
grandparents and
any update on the Cuban Interests Section brawl?

MR. BOUCHER: No. Those visas remain under review and I don't
think we've seen
anything from the DC Police yet.

Q Those grandmothers aren't getting any younger, Richard.
(Laughter.)

MR. BOUCHER: We had a question back here.

Q Different subject. Turkish Prime Minister and the Interior Minister
today,
they announced - they had a joint press conference. They announced
that a
well-known to Turkish secular and respectful journalist's murder case,
the
Iranian Embassy staff based in Ankara, they involved, they put
personally the
bomb under the journalist's car.

In the past, the US very sensitive to condemn the Iranian terrorism
export to all
of the area and this time you are very so quiet and this country also in
the
terrorism supporting country list. Do you have any reaction on the
subject?

MR. BOUCHER: Give us a chance. I mean, you just told us that this
press
conference occurred recently. I don't know exactly when. But we've
just heard
about this. We will look into it and get something for you.

Q Let me come back to Taiwan. The same Post article indicated that
the AIT
Director in Taiwan, has tried to exert influence in the writing of the
President-elect Chen's inaugural speech. Would you confirm or deny
that or

provide some clarification?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I am not going to talk about -- I'm not going to talk about that. We have meetings with a lot of people a lot of times and we don't get into every single one and try to talk about it.

Q Have you been given any talking points on his speech?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not going to try to characterize it one way or the other.

Q Do you have any readout on Mr. Pickering's trip to Colombia the end of last week? We didn't seem to see much on it. Perhaps you might have something.

MR. BOUCHER: It was a productive visit. No, we can tell you a little bit more than that, obviously. It was an important trip for us and it was productive. They discussed the details of implementation of Plan Colombia. They identified gaps where additional coordination is needed. The focus was, in fact, on extending Plan Colombia into southern Colombia. They had extensive discussions about human rights, judicial reform, alternative development and poppy and coca eradication and the peace process. Pickering also promised that we will work with Congress to seek early funding of the aid package for Colombia.

Q Do you have any comments on the Russian Media Minister now saying that Radio Liberty should have its license pulled because its broadcasts are hostile to the state, just a few days after they raided Media Most?

MR. BOUCHER: That's very interesting. We'll look into it.

Q I just have one follow-up on Sierra Leone, very quick. Haven't heard much over the weekend about the hostages, about the -- well, the missing UN troops. Does the US have any knowledge that these troops are hostages and that they're alive and well? Or what more can you say?

MR. BOUCHER: I think there actually was quite a bit over the weekend about releases, about some of these people that were released. And I don't think we have any particular information on their welfare and whereabouts. But certainly we know from the United Nations that a large number of people are being held still. We welcome the releases and we hope the others get out as well.

Q Is the US working with the United Nations to that end?

MR. BOUCHER: We're talking to everybody about the situation, yes.

Thank you.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:15 p.m.)

16 5/15/00

Exchange Mail

DATE-TIME 05/17/2000 10:26:59 AM

FROM Schwartz, Eric P. (MULTI)

CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT FW: Sierra Leone Guidance [UNCLASSIFIED]

TO Anderson, Brooke D. (NSCCOMM)
Brown, Katherine A. (PRESS/INTERN)
Crowley, Philip J. (PRESS)
Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
Hammer, Michael A. (PRESS)
Hoelzer, Jennifer I. (PRESS/INTERN)
Stockwell, David B. (PRESS)
Wozniak, Natalie S. (PRESS)
Battenfield, Pat A. (AF)
Byrne, Catherine E. (AF)
Dempsey, Nora B. (AF)
Smith, Gayle E. (AF)
Cooper, Colby J. (ADMIN)
Feldman, Daniel F. (MULTI)
McLean, Matthew K. (MULTI)
Naplan, Steven J. (MULTI)
Patten, Wendy L. (MULTI)
Schwartz, Eric P. (MULTI)
Smith, Peter D. R. (MULTI)
Vaccaro, Jonathan M. (Matt) (MULTI)
Wilcox, Richard M. (MULTI)
Williams, Mary C. (ADMIN)

CARBON_COPY

TEXT_BODY

PJ:

Revised guidance. The Sankoh stuff ought to be shared with JBS. Already worked with Gayle.

Erioc

-----Original Message-----

From:
Brown, Katherine A. (PRESS/INTERN)
Sent: Wednesday, May 17,
2000 9:37 AM
To: Schwartz, Eric P. (MULTI)
Cc: @PRESS - Public
Affairs

Subject: Sierra Leone Guidance [UNCLASSIFIED]

David
will call you about this.

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT sierraleoneMAY17gui.doc
SIERRA LEONE
May 16, 2000

BACKGROUND: Beginning May 1, the rebels in Sierra Leone, known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), have attacked UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, killing at least four (Kenyans) and holding some 500 others. The crisis began when 8-10 RUF fighters attempted to enter the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration(DDR) center at Makeni. The local RUF commander demanded that UNAMSIL turn the "deserters" and "stolen weapons" over to his fighters. When UNAMSIL refused, the RUF responded by taking surrounding the camp and taking 11 UNAMSIL personnel hostage. Since then, RUF forces have attacked UNAMSIL units in several areas, but both Freetown and the area around Lungi airport are still under GoSL and UNAMSIL control. As the rebels have reportedly continued their attacks, government forces and forces allied with the government are moving to engage RUF rebels outside Freetown. The UK has troops on the ground, which have helped to stabilize the situation -- especially in the Freetown area. On the morning of May 17, it was reported that the rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, had been captured by GoSL elements, and he is now reportedly at Lungi under GoSL and British control -- though the British are apparently saying he is in GoSL custody.

Core Points

* The international community is acting to reinforce the mission in

Sierra Leone.

The UN, West African nations and others are moving additional forces to stabilize the situation. The United States is committed to help.

* Last week, a C-17 flew supplies and equipment for a Jordanian special forces contingent to Freetown.

* We are prepared to help support the movement of other troops as well.

* A U.S. logistics team is in Abuja helping the Nigerians determine its needs, including logistics and equipment, in preparation for a possible deployment of West African soldiers.

* Jesse Jackson is scheduled to leave for the region as part of our strong support for regional efforts to stabilize the situation, and consult with leaders on how best to move Sierra Leone back towards the peace process.

Can you confirm reports of the arrest of Foday Sankoh?

We understand Foday Sankoh was arrested today and is in the custody of the Government of Sierra Leone at the airport in Freetown.

What will be done with him? What should be done with him? Do you support a war crimes tribunal for him?

* Sankoh is in flagrant egregious violation of the Lome agreement -- in particular, through his continued failure to order release of all remaining UN detainees.

* As we have said in the past, we support the principle of accountability, though the critical decisions on these matters must be taken by the government and people of Sierra Leone.

Does that mean a war crimes trial?

* It is premature to prescribe what form that should take; again, this is

fundamentally a decision for the people of Sierra Leone.

Is the Security Council considering a change in the mission's mandate? What is the U.S. position on whether the Nigerians should deploy as part of UNAMSIL or not?

* While progress is being made to stabilize the situation on the ground, it is certainly clear that the international troops in Sierra Leone need to be reinforced.

* The UN is working through the flow of additional troops (Bangladeshi, Indian and Jordanian) into Sierra Leone. We have logistics advisors in New York helping with that effort. We are coordinating with troop-contributing countries, such as Nigeria, about what is required to increase the force's size and to make it more capable.

* The Security Council and concerned governments from within and outside the region are now discussing how best to accomplish this objective; no decision has been made regarding a change in mandate. Our overriding concern is to ensure that forces on the ground will be effective.

Is the U.S. planning to assist in additional deployments?

* We supported last week's Jordanian movement. We are discussing with the UN what else needs to be done. We want to help. At the same time, when there are cheaper, commercial options available to move forces, the UN should and has taken advantage of them.

Why is the U.S. charging so much for transport assistance?

* For the U.S. and all other governments, in-kind support for UN operations is ultimately reimbursed by the UN.

* This is a long-established practice in accordance not only with UN procedures, but congressional requirements.

* The price involved is the actual incremental costs, and nothing more.

Will that support include U.S. troops?

* There is no discussion of deploying U.S. combat forces. We have alerted Congress, however, that from time to time, small numbers of personnel may be on the ground as we provide airlift support. We also have a small number of exchange officers serving with British forces in the region.

How do you respond to criticisms of the UNAMSIL force?

* To be sure, the force has suffered from lack of adequate supplies, and slow deployments, which we are trying to address.

* But let's be clear. The UN force was confronted by an all-out assault by Africa's most brutal rebel movement, in circumstances where the UN force was neither designed nor equipped for full-scale combat.

* In recent days, there has been excellent coordination among UNAMSIL, government forces and British troops on the ground. Freetown and some of the outlying areas are more stable and secure.

Why is Reverend Jackson traveling to West Africa?

* Jesse Jackson, the President's Special Envoy for Democracy in Africa, is returning to the region to work with leaders there for a peaceful resolution of this crisis. Reverend Jackson has been actively involved in our diplomatic effort to help the people of Sierra Leone realize their peaceful aspirations.

What about his comments over the weekend comparing the RUF and the ANC? Do you agree with what he said. That has appeared to have caused considerable alarm in Sierra Leone. Will that undercut his mission?

* No. In fact, President Jackson will be traveling to Sierra Leone at the invitation of President Kabbah of Sierra Leone, with whom he spoke yesterday.

* Reverend Jackson has publicly clarified what he said about the RUF and the ANC.

Clearly, they are not in any way directly comparable. He was not trying to make any statement of moral equivalency. He was clearly saying that the RUF has to this point squandered the opportunity given them by the people of Sierra Leone to be a constructive force within the framework of the Lome Agreement. They have violated their commitments made last year under the Lome Agreement. Nevertheless, they still have the ability to change course, accept the principles of Lome - return to a cease-fire, disarm and demobilize, accept the UN presence and support a free, fair and open electoral process - and be a positive influence to help the people of Sierra Leone realize their peaceful aspirations.

Exchange Mail

DATE-TIME 05/17/2000 7:16:17 PM

FROM Wozniak, Natalie S. (PRESS)

CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT State Department Press Briefing - May 17, 2000 [UNCLASSIFIED]

TO Anderson, Brooke D. (NSCCOMM)
Brown, Katherine A. (PRESS/INTERN)
Crowley, Philip J. (PRESS)
Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
Hammer, Michael A. (PRESS)
Hoelzer, Jennifer I. (PRESS/INTERN)
Stockwell, David B. (PRESS)
Wozniak, Natalie S. (PRESS)
Aragoncillo, Leandro A. (VP)
Babbitt, James F. (VP)
Beardsley, Tyler S. (VP)
Black, Steven K. (VP)
Bolan, Christopher J. (VP)
Davidson, Leslie K. (VP)
Dennett, Todd H. (VP)
Fuerth, Leon S. (VP)
Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
Hinckley, Steedman (VP)
Orfini, Michael H. (VP)
Osius, Theodore G. (VP)
Roberts, Michael W. (VP)
Saunders, Richard M. (VP)
Woolston, Ann E. (VP)
Anderson, Brooke D. (NSCCOMM)
Crowley, Philip J. (PRESS)
Matthews, Sonyia (SPCHW)
Sleder, Nicholas A. (NSCCOMM/INTERN)

CARBON_COPY**TEXT_BODY****TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT**

dpb # 46 May 17.doc
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Daily Press Briefing Index
Wednesday, May 17, 2000

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DPB #46

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2000, 12:50 P.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. BOUCHER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here. I have three things I want to talk about. Let's reverse the order.

We are going to put out a statement today giving the details of the 17th US-Mexico Binational Commission and details of the various plenary that you can cover and the press conference in the afternoon. As you know, these meetings are hosted by the Secretary, involve a great number of officials, 15 working groups from both countries. Meetings alternate between Washington and Mexico City and they discuss a full range of issues in the bilateral relationship. So that will be held tomorrow, Thursday, May 18, here in this building. We will give you the details on how to cover that.

Second of all, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr., the President and the Secretary of State's Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa will leave May 17th to visit Nigeria, Liberia, Mali, Guinea and Sierra Leone, security conditions permitting. As you know, he is traveling at the request of the President. His mission is to consult with regional governments about efforts under way and about ways the United States can support their efforts to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone. We will put up a full statement on that one as well.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. BOUCHER: I don't know.

Q Should we stay on this?

MR. BOUCHER: We can either do that or I can tell you about the crackdown on the media in Serbia and we can then go to anything --

Q The crackdown on the media where?

Q In Serbia.

Q Oh, not here. (Laughter.)

MR. BOUCHER: Let's not get paranoid, okay?

Q We're a democracy.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, we can talk about Sierra Leone first.

Q Just that I noticed you had a little caveat there, "security conditions permitting," which was not on the first statement. What exactly does that mean and is there some thought that it might have to be delayed again?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I think the only issue is that things are a bit fluid. There has been a delay in making the arrangements. At this point, the plan is to go today and go to all those places. I don't want to be asked, you know, seven days from now, how come you said he was going to X spot and he didn't make it. But I will answer that question at the time, anyway.

Q You said the places that the security conditions are permitting, not the fact that he would depart today? I just want to clarify that.

MR. BOUCHER: I suppose it would apply to both but the plan is to depart today and go to Nigeria, Liberia, Mali, Guinea and Sierra Leone. That is the intended order.

Q Okay, that's slightly different.

MR. BOUCHER: No, I can't say why the order has been changed. Really, again, we get back to the issue of travel arrangements. There is a level at which, you know, things change because of all sorts of reasons.

Q The Secretary said that the arrest of Foday Sankoh was good news. Can you expand on that? Does this make it easier to resolve the crisis in Sierra

Leone?

MR. BOUCHER: I think the key point I want to make today is the issue of what happens next for Foday Sankoh and the peace process is really in the hands of the people and the Government of Sierra Leone. As far as we understand, they have made no decisions on this issue but that's where we stand now. We do understand he was arrested. Our information is that he appeared in a Freetown neighborhood early on the morning of May 17th with only one bodyguard. Sierra Leone police took him into custody. For his safety, he was transported to an undisclosed location by a British military helicopter. He remains in custody by the Sierra Leone police.

Q Do you know if he's been mistreated or anything else?

MR. BOUCHER: We understand the government -- well, no. I don't know. We don't know of anything unusual.

Q Richard, do you think he ought to have access to a counselor. He'd like to have fair treatment and rule of law and all that kind of stuff?

MR. BOUCHER: We always want that, Barry, as you're pointing out in your question. But exactly what the next step is, what happens to him is in the hands of the people and the government of Sierra Leone. So should they decide on a course that requires fair treatment, or a lawyer, or anything else, we'd certainly support that.

Q I don't want to quibble but why the people? Why not the government of Sierra Leone? I mean, would you like the people to act on all detentions in various countries?

MR. BOUCHER: It's a democratic government. The government and the people are together, I understand.

Q The US Ambassador there apparently is telling reporters he would

rather

Jackson not go. And the Sierra Leonians are threatening to cancel his visa. Do you know anything about that?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I haven't heard either one say anything like that.

Q Yesterday, you made a point, I thought, or at least I got the impression you were making a point, that Foday Sankoh was not -- he still had the chance to be rehabilitated, to come back into the process. Is that still the opinion of the US, or are you just leaving it up to whatever Sierra Leone wants, Sierra Leone gets?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, I think you have to go back to the history of this, and that the fact that he was in the peace process was a decision of the government and the people of Sierra Leone. And the next step in either the peace process or with him personally is up to them as well.

Q Does that mean that the US would not object if President Kabbah said, "Okay, Foday, you can come on back?"

MR. BOUCHER: Again, it's up to the government and the people of Sierra Leone. I'm not going to push them towards one direction or the other.

Q Are you still supporting Lome agreement?

MR. BOUCHER: We want to see the Lome agreement implemented. Obviously demilitarization and surrender of weapons, integration into a political process all remain important tasks.

Q You kind of avoided the question about whether this made it easier to resolve the crisis. I mean leaving Sankoh's future role aside to the fact that he is kind of under control. Does this make it easier --

MR. BOUCHER: I think it would really be speculative at this point for me to say one way or the other on that.

Q Is there any planned possibility of Reverend Jackson meeting with Foday Sankoh? Is the US Government for that or against that? Or does it have any position on it?

MR. BOUCHER: There's no plan for him to meet with Foday Sankoh.

Q But he did say Friday, and he hasn't fully retracted that part of his comments, that he thought that there was a role for Sankoh to play. So has the US Government given Reverend Jackson specific instructions not to meet with him?

MR. BOUCHER: We've obviously stayed in touch with Reverend Jackson as he prepares for his trip. I'm sure he knows the view that we're expressing here now.

Q He's your envoy, so what are his instructions?

MR. BOUCHER: I'll leave that between him and the people who give him his instructions. Our view is this, and that's the view that he'll be carrying forward.

Q But our view is what? Because he said on Friday --

MR. BOUCHER: Our view is that it's up to the people and the government of Sierra Leone.

Q What if Sankoh wants to meet with Jackson?

MR. BOUCHER: Again, there's no plans for him to meet Foday Sankoh at this point.

Q If Jackson wants to meet with Sankoh, will you allow him to? Because he did say on Friday that he thought he had a role to play.

MR. BOUCHER: First of all, a lot of things have happened since Friday. Second of all, there's no plan to do this at this point. That's where we are. I don't know how to say it any other way.

Q I just want to clarify whether --

MR. BOUCHER: If this, if that, if this, if that. I can't answer every possibility.

Q But one can assume that he's been given some guidance from the State Department, since he is their envoy, and I'm just wondering, has he been given specific instructions to not talk to Foday Sankoh?

MR. BOUCHER: There are no plans for him to meet with Foday Sankoh at this point. And that's what I can tell you.

Q Is Sankoh considered a potential war criminal because of some of the activities of the forces that supposedly respond to him? I mean, like the kidnapping of UN peacekeepers. If not a war criminal, then a terrorist? Is there some category that he's now fallen into as a result of the events of the last couple of weeks?

MR. BOUCHER: We've said he's in violation of Lome Accords. We've expressed our serious and deep concern about the actions of taking UN soldiers hostage.

But the next step and exactly what category -- category implies some specific action, and that really has to be left up to the government of Sierra Leone.

Q (Inaudible) the Lome Accords, then, I'm not sure what the status of the Lome Accords at all. Maybe you have an answer on that. It's just that -- in a sense, the worst, the conflict started up again. His forces have violated it, so you have a state of conflict there. And there are specific rules protecting UN forces from what's happened to them.

MR. BOUCHER: Yes, Roy, as you know, getting someone on a war crimes charge is a different thing than saying he's violated a peace accord. Now, whatever happens in that direction really we'll be seeing in coming days. There's no

decision at
this point.

Q How would you describe the state of affairs in Sierra Leone? Is it a conflict now? Has the conflict resumed?

MR. BOUCHER: There's fighting, I mean, that's pretty obvious. There are UN hostages being taken. There are actions that violate the Lome Accords. The state of affairs, though, is -- the point we keep making is that we want to see peace, the Government of Sierra Leone will have decisions in front of it, what to do about Mr. Sankoh, what to do next in the peace process, how to achieve the demilitarization and political integration that were envisaged in the Lome Accords, and obviously we're in support of their efforts and particularly the UN effort to see implementation. But exactly what happens next in terms of specifics of charges or trials or things like that is not a decided question at this point.

Q Richard, you're saying it's up to the Sierra Leone government to decide on their course of action and the Secretary said this morning that Congress is tying her hands on any kind of US participation or even support for a peacekeeping force. And then you have an envoy going.

What does he have in the way of either carrots or sticks to get anybody to do anything and what can you say to convince us that his mission is not essentially futile?

MR. BOUCHER: It may come as a surprise to you but the United States does have a certain role in the world, even if we don't always have the money to pay our peacekeeping costs. And this is one area where our funding is specifically being held, the funding that we need for this peacekeeping operation.

But, be that as it may, we still attempt to do the best with what we've

got even
if it's less than the penny and we can take actions and get involved in
situations, such as by sending a presidential envoy that has a certain
clout and
certain influence in the area.

Q If you are sending Reverend Jesse Jackson, are you saying that UN
have failed
really in Sierra Leone.

MR. BOUCHER: No.

Q So what role is the UN playing, then?

MR. BOUCHER: The UN has a quite obvious role in terms of the
troops. There is
an accelerated deployment under way that we're trying to help with.
We are
trying to build up to the ultimate levels of I think it's 11,000 there to
see to
the implementation of the peace accords and try to help the Sierra
Leone
government, which has made these accords, bring peace to its country.

Q What's new with the Serbian media?

Q Charles Taylor is making some noise that the capture of Sankoh
might
complicate the release of the rest of the hostages. Do you think that --
does
the State Department think that's the case?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to speculate one way or the other.
Obviously, the
release of the hostages remains the most immediate concern.

Q Yesterday, a Canadian general who commanded UN peacekeeping
troops in Rwanda
said that he was absolutely disgusted by the Western powers for
setting up Third
World peacekeepers for failure in Sierra Leone. He said that the -- he
called
them the "big boys" -- left it to developing countries to try to take on
missions
for which they are not fully trained or equipped. Do you think the
general's
comments have merit?

MR. BOUCHER: I didn't see the general's comments. I don't want to
get into a

back-and-forth with the general that I haven't had a chance to listen to it.

What I would say is, let's remember the basic facts of the situation.

There was

a Lome agreement between the government and this rebel force to try to

demilitarize the situation, to achieve political integration, achieve peace in

Sierra Leone. The UN designed a force to go in and do that, help them do that,

help in the process of disarmament.

When one of the parties to that agreement turned on the agreement and began to

take the UN hostages and violate the agreement, that obviously changed the

situation. Now, there was a plan for a deployment of UN forces up to a higher

level that was in process. What we're doing now is trying to accelerate that and

make sure that in other ways we can make the UN force effective. But it wasn't

the UN's fault that the situation changed and got more dangerous. It was Foday

Sankoh's fault, of him and his rebels breaking out of this agreement.

Q Different subject?

MR. BOUCHER: One more on this and then we're going to do -- I want to get a

chance to talk about the Serbian media.

Q Back to kind of what Roy's point on the war crimes thing -- you know, a week

ago or two weeks ago, you were warning that he, that Sankoh, could lose the

immunity that he got under the Lome Agreement. And I am wondering why it doesn't

cost any bit of a penny to say that he's lost it or not, why won't you? Why all

of a sudden this is just left up to the people of Sierra Leone and President

Kabbah, who is kind of ineffectual?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, first of all, I don't agree with your characterization of

the government of Sierra Leone. But, second of all, the fact is the fact. I

don't think it bears restatement.

Q What characterization of the government? That it's ineffectual?

MR. BOUCHER: Ineffectual, yeah.

Q You think that that's an effective government in Freetown?

MR. BOUCHER: Let's not get into a big argument about this. They have an important and crucial role to play. Ultimately whether or not there is peace in Sierra Leone will depend on them and the decisions they make. So you can't write them out of the picture.

Q So decision on Sankoh's immunity is up to them entirely?

MR. BOUCHER: No, we've made clear that the Lome Accords provide for amnesty for events that happened before July 7, 1999, provided the accords are abided by. So that fact remains true.

Q That calls up the fact that the accords are not being abided by and that these activities have occurred after the date of the signing. Doesn't that suggest that if there is a state of conflict and Sankoh is committing breaches of law, that he's a war criminal?

MR. BOUCHER: Roy, what things may suggest to you and what we have to conclude and carry out in policy terms are a little bit different and we're just not there yet.

Q This is just a question of the man's culpability and whether he's a statesman or whether he's a criminal --

MR. BOUCHER: You know as well as anybody that when you start accusing people of war crimes, a lot of legal questions and questions of evidence. I think you and others have complained that it took so long for the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal to actually bring indictments because of that process.

I am not going to stand up here today, just because the man's in custody, and

start bringing charges against people. For the moment, the situation is that he's in custody of the Sierra Leone police. The next steps, the immediate next steps, are in the hands of the Sierra Leone government.

Q Serbia media, anything new?

MR. BOUCHER: I want to make a statement about the crackdown on the independent media in Serbia by the regime and make clear that the Belgrade regime's move to silence Serbia's independent media represents a major step in efforts to preserve Milosevic's dictatorship. This nighttime police raid smacks of desperate Bolshevik-style oppression.

The United States strongly condemns the Belgrade regime's crackdown on the independent press and the democratic opposition in Serbia. Next week, Secretary of State Albright will consult with our allies in Europe to determine what joint actions we will take in response to this blatant attack on the independent media. She will also meet with foreign ministers of the states neighboring Serbia to coordinate further responses.

Today, we will add six judges and prosecutors who have taken repressive actions against independent media to our ban on visas and we'll ask the European Union to do the same.

We will continue to monitor and add other names to the list. We will also immediately add family members of several top officials of the regime to our visa ban list and encourage the European Union to do that as well.

We will continue to review further actions to demonstrate our support for the independent media and the people of Serbia. We understand that citizens of Serbia have said that they will protest the government's action. The courage and activism of these people should be a signal to those around Milosevic that the

people of Serbia have grown tired of the regime and its oppression.

Q Richard, that consultation is in Florence, or is that a separate stop?

MR. BOUCHER: The NATO meetings in Florence, you'll have a chance to talk to all these people and various states of the region are there as part of the Partnership for Peace, as well.

Q Can you name the six judges, and not necessarily now in public because the names tend to be a little complicated. Perhaps on a piece of paper?

MR. BOUCHER: We'll try to do that.

Q And you say how many people are on that list of visa ban, visa ban list?

MR. BOUCHER: That's something I'll have to check on as well. We'll get you that answer this afternoon.

Q "Smacks of Bolshevik-style repression," who's writing this stuff?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, I mean look for the --

Q A former Radio Moscow correspondent that's gone bad?

Q This is the second time -- I don't really want to dwell on the rhetoric. But this is the second time in three days that you've come out with a statement, the first one basically cheerleading the thousands of protesters in the Belgrade square, and labeling a police -- the Serb police arrest of a person they say is an opposition activist for the murder of this official on Saturday, labeling their arrest and acclaim that he is an opposition as outrageous. Does the US have the facts to be able to say that this accusation is outrageous? I mean, it would seem pretty clear that Milosevic's cronies have one main enemy and that's the Serb opposition, which you're supporting. Is it out of the realm of consideration that the Serbian operation is running around "offing" Milosevic's top guys?

MR. BOUCHER: Are you asking me about what I said today, or

about something
else?

Q Well, I'm just asking, this is the second time, I mean, in three days -
-

MR. BOUCHER: Well, let's look at the facts of the situation. I think the facts are clear. The regime has taken continuous attempts to try to silence any kind of criticism. They've moved against the opposition. They've tried to repress the opposition. Now they're trying to repress the media. There's been a pattern of repressive measures by this regime and we think it fits the same pattern as the Bolsheviks. That's why we're saying it.

Q And then going back the labeling the claim that this suspect in the killing is outrageous. What's the evidence that it's outrageous? Just because the Serb police are --

MR. BOUCHER: I'd have to go back on the exact statement and look at it again. But I think there's been no evidence presented that there's any connection other than the opposition.

Q Did you say how many people are on the visa ban list at this point?

MR. BOUCHER: I was just asked that, and I promise to get it for you later.

Q Thank you.

Q (Inaudible) your urgent request to the Russians for an explanation of the --

Q On the media --

Q Yugoslav defense official - war crimes suspect. You're exercised about it, and were going to take it up urgently with the Russians. They had refused before then to comment on the situation --

MR. BOUCHER: We don't have any response at this point. I was asked the

question yesterday about whether we talked to the Russians before Mr. Ojdanic left Moscow. The answer is no. There was limited publicity, and there was no publicity in Russia until after Ojdanic had returned to Belgrade.

We are in the process, as we said, of raising it with senior Russian government officials in various ways at various levels. I don't have a response at this point. Our goal is to ensure that Moscow understands clearly how seriously we view the obligation to uphold UN Security Council resolutions in this area. And I think there have also been statements from the court in the Hague as well.

Q This is kind of related to Secretary Albright's concerns about the way Congress is treating Kosovo. Have you taken note of Governor Bush's description of the attempt to cut off funds and force the troops out as legislative overreach, which the chairman of the committee says may doom the proposal by Mr. Warner and whoever the other fellow was -

Q Byrd.

Q Byrd. Yeah. Is that --

MR. BOUCHER: I haven't taken note of that but --

Q Is that good news?

MR. BOUCHER: I haven't taken note of that and I have to say, except in very, very limited circumstances, would we comment positively or negatively on things that are said in the campaign. So I know we've -- well, I just want to leave it at that. I will try not to have any comments on things said by candidates.

Q A candidate, but I mean the effort to cut funding is probably as political as anything else. The whole process is a political process.

MR. BOUCHER: The Secretary expressed quite clearly what our view of that is this morning.

Q She did.

MR. BOUCHER: And Secretary Cohen has expressed a view as well.

Q Sure.

MR. BOUCHER: And so I will stick with the comments of the Administration and leave it to others to say what they want.

Q Can we go back to the defense minister for one second? You said there was no publicity while in Russia and it was only afterwards that you learned about it. But two days before this guy left, there was a report in the Yugoslav media, the state agency, saying he was going. Was the Department not aware of this report?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not sure we saw that. We certainly didn't feel like we knew about it in advance.

Q On the media again?

MR. BOUCHER: I just have to say, we didn't have the information in time to raise it while he was still in Moscow.

Q You said you would consult with allies on what steps to take. Can you give us any idea of what kinds of things are under consideration and can you say also whether there's been consultation on the visa ban? Are these same people on another visa ban which applies to European countries, for example?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, what I did say in the statement is that we will ask the European Union to do the same. So the measures being considered immediately are visa ban for prosecutors and judges and to some additional family members of several top officials. But we will also talk with our partners in countries in the area about further steps that might be taken.

Q Have they traditionally followed our requests on that? Have they gone along

with us on other suggestions for visa bans, the EU?

MR. BOUCHER: I think so. I'm too new to know. Phil says yes. He's been around longer than I have.

Q Is that request being made now or is it going to be made next week by the Secretary?

MR. BOUCHER: I am sure it will be made very, very soon.

Q Pre-trip?

MR. BOUCHER: I would expect it to be made before trip, yes.

On this or something else?

Q This is Milosevic.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay.

Q Apparently, his friendship with the Russians is not in ruins yet. They are announcing new loans for him yesterday. What's your assessment at this point of Milosevic's strength both within Serbia internationally and how should we sort of evaluate recent events in that regard?

MR. BOUCHER: I guess you can evaluate events any way you please. But if you look at the growing opposition and the growing unity of the opposition and you look at the increasingly repressive measures being taken by the regime, one has to have the sense that they're worried and that is not some kind of prediction; it's just, I think, an obvious characterization of the facts.

Q (Inaudible) the Russians are subsidizing or prepared to subsidize the Milosevic regime troubling? I mean, considering the Russians are, themselves, getting all sorts of international support, some of it coming from the United States?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, the support for Russian economic reform is just that. It is

decided on the basis of what is going on in Russia and particularly our desire to encourage Russia to continue working to meet its requirements for disbursement of funds, to continue with the current program of economic reform.

Clearly, we also want to talk to Russia, we do talk to Russia about all international issues where we are involved together and, clearly, understanding their obligations, particularly with regards their obligations under UN resolutions is quite important. We have consistently said to the Russians, we do expect them to fulfill their obligations regardless of any dialogue they might want to have with the Yugoslav leadership and we've been urging them to avoid steps that would reduce the international isolation of the Milosevic regime.

Q Are they just having a dialogue or are they apt to do something you would find more alarming, so far as relations or ties with Yugoslavia? Aren't they talking about military ties?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to sort of speculate on how far this might go. But, clearly, we believe strongly that the Milosevic regime needs to be isolated internationally and not reached out to in any way and therefore we've been quite clear in our discussions with the Russians, in our discussions with others and in our discussions and public statements that we think people should be increasing that isolation and not reaching out to them.

Q (Inaudible) sanctions on Russia is for breaking with what you hoped would be a united position of other countries?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to speculate on things. I want to say Russia clearly has obligations and we will be making that increasingly clear to them.

Q Richard, are there any penalties for failing to apprehend war criminals that wander through your parade grounds?

MR. BOUCHER: I would have to look at the UN resolutions.

Q The Binational meeting with Mexico, can you give us more details about it?

What are the most important subjects of the meetings?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, among the many, many subjects to be discussed I would hesitate to choose the most important ones. There are 15 working groups that will look at topics, such as border issues, education, environment, business and consular affairs and the working groups are often chaired at cabinet levels. There is a whole host of subjects to be discussed. This is a meeting to discuss the whole range of our relations with Mexico and it's an important meeting that we do twice a year.

Q The DEA officials yesterday before Congress raised the issue of the security of the agents working in Mexico. And they want the Mexican authorities to give the permission to carry guns for their own protection.

What is the State Department's position or view about the security for the DEA agents in Mexico or any US agent working against narco-traffickers in Mexico?

MR. BOUCHER: We clearly want our people to be safe and want them to be able to carry out their jobs. But specifically a reaction on that point, I'll have to look into it and try to get you something.

Q On Colombia, do you have any reaction to the decision of the government of Colombia to suspend the peace talks with the rebels?

MR. BOUCHER: We fully support the stand that President Pastrana has taken. We think it is courageous and it indicates to the rebels that if they are serious about reaching a peaceful solution in the Colombian conflict, that these barbaric acts have to cease.

Q If I can follow up on that? The Colombian police are saying that the FARC has

received in the past few months advice from such groups as IRA from Ireland or ETA from Spain in devising this kind of device that they used to kill this woman.

Do you have any information on this?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have any information on that. But I think you might find in our terrorism reports some references to the kind of support that they might be receiving.

Q I have another question on Latin America.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay.

Q Yesterday, the American Chamber of Commerce of Cuba in the United States were mentioning that the President has the authority or the State Department to reestablish the banking relations with Cuba in terms to applying the amendment that has been approved in the Congress to sell medicine, food and agricultural products to Cuba. My question is, is that correct? It is possible for the Clinton Administration to reestablish banking cooperation with Cuba without the authority or the permission of Congress?

MR. BOUCHER: I would have to look very carefully at the law and the regulations to determine that and I'm afraid I can't do that for you now. Treasury might.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. BOUCHER: As pointed out by my brethren over here, perhaps Treasury Department would be able to give you a closer read on that.

Q Anything new on the Cuba visas for the grandparents?

MR. BOUCHER: No. Under review. That's right.

Q Several weeks ago, your predecessor said that we should expect a trip to the Middle East by the Secretary sooner rather than later. Any word on that expected trip?

MR. BOUCHER: No, there are no dates. We still expect her to go to the region but there are no dates.

Q You still expect it sooner rather than later?

MR. BOUCHER: Within the definition we usually use of "sooner," yes.

Q Do you expect it, say, by June?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to speculate on dates.

Q Richard, two questions. Yesterday, I saw --

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, we're going to stay in the Middle East for a second.

Q Middle East/Northern Europe. Do you have any new information on Dennis Ross' travels or whether they've reached the Scandinavian countries?

MR. BOUCHER: Dennis is coming home. Dennis Ross, Ambassador Dennis Ross is coming home --
Q Via?

MR. BOUCHER: Via an airplane.

Q Via what city?

MR. BOUCHER: He is going to be an airplane and he is going to come back to Washington.

Q Where has he been?

MR. BOUCHER: He's been in Israel.

Q I thought he was going to come back at the end of the week. Today's Wednesday.

Q He's coming back today?

MR. BOUCHER: Ambassador Ross and Deputy Special Middle East Coordinator Aaron Miller will be returning to Washington this evening.

Q Why? Have they run out of work to do?

MR. BOUCHER: They met with the parties. He's met with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat. They've had a series of meetings in the region and they want to come back and report to the President and the Secretary. As you know, Prime Minister Barak is coming here next week so we will be wanting to get ready for that.

Q Did he make any bridging proposals, which is something that was under consideration if the talks -- it's a sign of progress, I suppose, if you make bridging proposals. Has he made any?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have any characterization of the talks at this point, other than to say that there is a serious effort under way by the parties to overcome gaps and reach agreement. We've obviously been out there. We're going to work through a variety of ways. To help them do that, we are going to continue to play a role.

Q Has the State Department made much -- I don't know if it is before this trip or the one before it -- of, you know, a more active role? That he be in the talks and wouldn't just be available, they would be part -- the US would be part of it. But I don't hear that as having happened. I mean, negotiations between the two sides, not with each side separately.

And also, you know, his presence in Stockholm has been verified by just about everybody except you folks here. You were historically left out of all sorts of -- embarrassed, I'm sure -- the State Department was, by all sorts of back-channel negotiations like in Oslo and Hussein and the Israelis and the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Is Dennis Ross or the US in some other way actively engaged in these back channel negotiations?

MR. BOUCHER: Look --

Q We know they're going on; you don't have to confirm that. What is the US role in them?

MR. BOUCHER: The Palestinians and the Israelis are talking to each other in different ways at different levels. I am not going to get into the who, what, when, where and how. I can certainly tell you that both of the parties are focused on trying to reach agreement. They are engaged in serious negotiations and we are actively working with them in that process.

Q Can I go back to the original question?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not going to go into who, what, when, where and how on the talks.

Q You are not going to deny that he went to Stockholm?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not going to go into who, what, when, where and how on the talks.

Q And, secondly, didn't you say earlier this week that he was going to be staying here through the weekend?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, the weekend is fast approaching in the Middle East. I don't have anything to read into the fact that he's coming in --

Q It's Wednesday. I mean, it's not really the weekend.

MR. BOUCHER: Well, he's coming back tonight, okay? The point is, he's been out there, he's done the work, he's been in touch with the parties, the parties have been in touch with each other and he's coming back now to prepare to the next step, which is Prime Minister Barak's visit.

Q But is there some change of plans on his part? He sped up his return? Or he's speeding up his return, because it is evening already.

MR. BOUCHER: I will have to check actually what his original reservations were but I understand that he's ready to come back now and that's about all.

Q You expect him to come directly back to the United States without making any stops other than ones that might be required by plane travel?

MR. BOUCHER: Were I to answer that question, the next question would be, how did he get there to begin with. So I think I am just going to stay out of the travel itinerary business.

Q Well, how about this then. Do you expect him in Washington tonight?

MR. BOUCHER: I expect him to Washington this evening.

Q To be here?

MR. BOUCHER: He will be returning to Washington this evening. I will have to check whether it's "be here" or he's getting on a plane to come here.

Q Without any progress?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I came very far from saying that.

Q New subject? The President has just announced \$300 million -- a new dose of money for anti-terrorism efforts and he cited specifically the cross-border threats of the love bug and the millennium terrorism threats. Do you have anything on this? Could you expand on the announcement?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't. I think we could check with the White House and get that.

Q Yesterday I saw walking out of this building the former Prime Minister of Pakistan Bhutto. One, what she was doing, who she met? And, number two, the Supreme Court of Pakistan is saying now that whatever General Musharraf did, it was right for the country and also he will stay now in power for at least three years and 90 days. And another report said that now General

Musharraf is ready
to change his status from (inaudible) to president.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, I don't know if there are two or three
questions in there.
On the first one, on Benazir Bhutto being in this building, I wasn't
aware of
that, I'll have to check on it for you.

On the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision, I think we would simply
say that
overturning democracy is not right. We've expressed our concerns and
our view
that the need is to get back to a democratic government as soon as
possible.

Q Do you have any information on Stu Eizenstat's talks in Austria on
the package
they are trying to negotiate on the status of the German package?

MR. BOUCHER: I think we have talked about the general parameters
of what's
being discussed in the past. But, at this point, the negotiations are still
continuing. I think there are further discussions expected in
Washington on May
22nd. And did you say Austria or Germany? Because that's the
Germany --

Q Right. He's in Austria right now and -

MR. BOUCHER: He just arrived in Austria, I think. He's been in
Germany.

Q He's just traveling.

Q (Inaudible) said he was in Austria yesterday. I think they had talks
with the
Austrians yesterday.

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have anything new on the talks with the
Austrians.

Q I think they made some progress.

MR. BOUCHER: Well, I hope so. We definitely hope so but I don't
have a report
on that. What I do have is I know he has been discussing a draft
agreement in
Germany and that process will continue in Washington, on May 22.

Q And apparently the Germans now say, according to Reuters, that they have a package ready for approval with the outlines being \$5 billion --

MR. BOUCHER: I think we've discussed the outlines before and the issues that were under discussion. It's not quite finished yet. There are remaining discussions that have to be held and those will be held in Washington on May 22nd to deal with a few remaining issues.

Q Nothing happened yesterday or this week that changes basically where things stand?

MR. BOUCHER: It is still under discussion but there are a few issues left.

Q Can you tell us why the decision by the US to lobby against this World Bank -- these World Bank loans to Iran is not in conflict with the Administration's desire for rapprochement?

MR. BOUCHER: First of all, it remains our policy to oppose multilateral lending to Iran including by the World Bank. Congress has directed that the United States oppose multilateral lending to countries that are designated by the Secretary of State as state sponsors of terrorism. Iran has been so designated and therefore it remains our policy to oppose loans to Iran.

Q On Taiwan, please?

MR. BOUCHER: Sure.

Q The inauguration this weekend, members of the DPP have suggested that the US could play a much more active role in securing peace across the Taiwan Strait. Do you have any idea -- new proposals, any comment on that?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I don't. We were asked about the issue of mediation the other day and we have said we are not mediating. We don't -- haven't been asked to and we don't really expect to. We don't seek to play that role.

Q What do you think the best thing that the new president could say in his speech to keep going in the direction of peace there?

MR. BOUCHER: We will leave that to him. We've always support one China, a peaceful dialogue between the parties across the Straits as the best solution. So anything that moves us closer towards a dialogue will be helpful.

Q Do you have views on the language that's coming out of the Hill now about a commission to oversee China's human rights and trade behavior?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have anything new on that. We understand there is the discussion up there. It could prove constructive but we'll have to see.

Q Is the Secretary putting much effort into talking to Congress about the need to approve PNTR?

MR. BOUCHER: Yes.

Q How much would you say?

MR. BOUCHER: A lot.

Q Is she -- maybe could you give some examples of whether she is making phone calls or seeing people in person?

MR. BOUCHER: She's doing both. But I think you've seen in public the examples. She's made trips around the country, she's held meetings and visited with people. She's made speeches. In the last month or so, she's been in New York and we did Denver, we went to Berkeley. She's been in a number of places around the country. New Orleans, although that was primarily a Caribbean trip. Boston.

So she's been out talking to the American people in a variety of ways about the importance of this. She's been talking through you to the American people as well. And she considers it, as she has said -- and she said again this morning -- the most important national security vote Congress will have to take

this
year.

Q The President is sending Congress a new proposal that at least 200,000 visas, new visas, for IT's should be entered for the next three years. One, does this Department support that? And, two, which country will the most benefit from this?

MR. BOUCHER: 300,000 what?

Q 200,000 new visas per year for the next three years for IT professionals.

MR. BOUCHER: Information technology people?

Q Right.

MR. BOUCHER: As you know, we've done that in the past. Obviously, this Department supports it and we would end up having to issue the visas. But I don't have any details for you. Again, I can try to get that probably from the White House.

Q Does the Secretary have lunch today with President Carter? Is that today?

MR. BOUCHER: What's on the public schedule? Let me say yes, regardless of what's on the public schedule.

Q Will they be talking any business in terms of the Carter Center operations or is it just a private thing, do you know?

MR. BOUCHER: It is not the kind of meeting we would ever give a readout of, so they have conversations about a whole lot of things.

Thank you.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:37 p.m.)

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