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ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES INTELLIGENCE REFORMS

The Bush administration has taken a number of steps to improve U.S. intelligence-gathering and intelligence-analysis capabilities and remains open to “ideas that build upon the reforms that we’re already implementing,” White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters July 19.

The bipartisan 9/11 Commission is scheduled to release its final 500-page report during the week of the July 19. The report is expected to include recommendations for improving U.S. handling of intelligence in the fight against terror.

McClellan cited past reforms saying, “We worked to create the Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC), we worked to pass the Patriot Act, to knock down the wall between law enforcement and intelligence. And we also are continuing to work to transform the FBI, so that its primary mission is counterterrorism now.”

McClellan also cited bolstering human intelligence, increasing investments in technologies, and enhancing ways to share information as steps needed to improve intelligence capabilities.

“[T]he president’s number one priority is to protect the American people,” said McClellan, “and he’s made it very clear, if there are additional ideas out there that can improve our intelligence gathering and help us better protect the American people, he is very much in favor of moving forward on those ideas. “

When asked about possible connections between Iran with al-Qaeda, McClellan said, the president had concerns about Iran.

LEADERSHIP CRUCIAL FOR PALESTINIAN SECURITY

It is important to have a Palestinian cabinet in place that is “committed to cracking down on terrorism and establishing a unified security structure to improve the security situations,” said McClellan.

According to reports, Palestine Prime Minister Yasser Arafat asked former Palestinian chief of security Abdel Razek Majaide to return to his office on July 19 in response to public anger over the assignment of Arafat’s relative, Moussa Arafat, to the position.

Moussa Arafat’s assignment over the weekend triggered unrest within the Gaza Strip as citizens protested corruption within the Palestinian government.

“It’s even more important now that we have a Palestinian leadership in place that is committed to establishing the institutions necessary for a democratic state to emerge,” McClellan said.

“When you have the institutions in place, it’s bigger than any one person,” he said, “The leaders will emerge and be able to proceed forward on the vision that the president has outlined.”

SUPPORT FOR HAITI DONORS’ CONFERENCE ENCOURAGED

The United States has made “significant commitments” to Haiti by helping to address the security situation there and by providing humanitarian assistance, McClellan said.

According to news reports, the U.S. representative met with international partners July 19 at a two-day international donors’ conference at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, where Haiti is outlining plans for reform and reconstruction. Conference organizers said they

hoped to raise \$924 million to revive Haiti’s ravaged economy and lay the foundation for a return to democratic rule.

McClellan said, “We hope everybody will step forward and meet their commitments to help the Haitian people build a brighter future. “

DOCUMENTS LINK KHARTOUM TO JINGAWAIT, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH SAYS

Group calls for strong Security Council resolution on Sudan

By Judy Aita

Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- Calling for sanctions against Sudanese government officials, Human Rights Watch officials July 19 revealed Sudanese government documents that they say provide “incontrovertible” proof that government officials directed recruitment, arming, and other support for the Jingaweit militia in Darfur.

At a press conference at U.N. headquarters, Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, described four documents obtained by the organization.

“The Sudanese government had maintained that the Jingaweit militia are an autonomous entity, that Khartoum has no control over the marauding atrocities committed by the Jingaweit. In fact, what these documents show is that the government in Khartoum has been supporting the Jingaweit as a matter of official policy. They have been supporting them through recruitment, through armament, and through a policy of impunity, at least with respect to some of the atrocities committed by the Jingaweit,” Roth said.

The Arabic-language documents cover the period from November 2003 to March 2004 and are from government authorities in Khartoum and North and South Darfur to local leaders. Human Rights Watch officials did not show the original documents. They allowed journalists to look at the English translations but did not provide copies for fear of endangering their source. The documents, they said, were provided by a longtime credible source who has proven reliable in the past.

The documents from February and March 2004 are particularly damning, Roth said.

A February 12 directive from the office of the commissioner of North Darfur, which was sent less than one week after Khartoum declared that it had ended support for the militias, calls for the increased recruitment and military support to “allied” or “loyalist” tribes and urges the design of a plan to settle “nomads” in areas from which civilians have fled.

Roth called such a resettlement policy “ethnic cleansing.”

A February 13 directive orders all security units in the area to permit the activities of Jingaweit leader Musa Hilal in North Darfur. The document “highlights the importance of non-interference so as not to question their authority” and authorizes security units in a North Darfur province to “overlook minor offenses by the fighters against civilians who are suspected members of the rebellion,” the Human Rights Watch director said.

A March directive from the office of the governor of South Darfur to the commissioner of Nyala, the largest town and capital of South Darfur, calls for the formation of a security committee and an increase in the level of recruitment to ensure that “the activities of the outlaws [i.e., rebels] are not brought into the state” and asks the commissioner to “swiftly deliver provisions and ammunition to the new camps to secure the southwestern part of the state,” Roth said.

In a written report, Human Rights Watch said that the documents “confirm the government of Sudan’s policy of official support to the Jingaweit militia. They illustrate patterns of official recruitment and military support to the militias by officials from a variety of levels in the Sudanese government, a pattern that cannot be dismissed as arbitrary or as the actions of individuals over-reaching their authority.”

“The directives issued by government officials illustrate the extent to which the government-backed militias are used as auxiliaries in the military campaign and a fundamental tool and instrument of government policy and military strategy,” the report said.

Roth said that a U.N. Security Council resolution that focuses exclusively on Darfur is urgently needed. He criticized the draft resolution currently under consideration in the Security Council for aiming to impose

sanctions only on Jingaweit leaders and not being tough enough on Khartoum.

“One of the things these documents show is that there is a need to look beyond the Jingaweit themselves. There is a need to go past the fiction maintained by Khartoum that there is a serious distinction between the Sudanese government and the Jingaweit militia that that government has sponsored,” he said.

Human Rights Watch wants the Security Council to impose sanctions on individual members of the Sudanese government, not simply on the leaders of the Jingaweit, Roth said.

“Given this policy of complicity that these documents demonstrate, we believe it is essential that the Security Council establish a commission of inquiry to look into the crimes against humanity and war crimes that have been committed and to identify the people behind it,” he said. “We can no longer trust Khartoum to police itself when Khartoum seems to be such a large part of the problem.”

Given allegations that Jingaweit are being incorporated into Sudanese police and military forces, an essential ingredient of any Security Council resolution on Darfur should be an international monitoring force to ensure that government pledges to disband the militia are carried out, Roth said.

“There is also a desperate need for significant international military presence in Darfur well beyond the modest deployment of the African Union so far” to protect returning refugees, he added.

The Security Council has scheduled a private meeting July 21 with the U.N. special envoy for Sudan, Jan Pronk. Pronk recently returned from Sudan, where he attended the first meeting of the group monitoring Khartoum’s compliance with the communiqué it signed during Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s visit earlier this month.

Returning to his office from his trip to Africa, Annan said July 19 that he is waiting for reports from Pronk, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights before deciding whether Sudan is abiding by the communiqué.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard reported that U.N. officials attending the monitoring group meeting in Khartoum said that although humanitarian access to the camps had improved, there had been no progress on security and protection of internally displaced persons in the region. Instead, air raids and attacks by the Jingaweit and government-aligned militia were making the displaced persons too afraid to return to their villages.

Human Rights Watch is an independent, nongovernmental organization, headquartered in New York City, that conducts fact-finding investigations into human rights abuses by governments and non-state actors in all regions of the world.

STATE'S ARMITAGE, IRAQ'S ZEBARI MEET REPORTERS IN BAGHDAD JULY 18

Armitage says U.S. committed to offering maximum support to Iraq

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, the highest-ranking member of the Bush administration to visit Iraq since the restoration of sovereignty, and Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari held discussions in Baghdad July 18 on the political and security situation in Iraq.

Armitage said the U.S. government is committed to supporting the Iraqi government "to the absolute extent we can."

"... Iraqis are making the decision that they're going to have a future and they're going to be involved in all the full activities in the world," Armitage said.

Commenting on the decision of the Philippines to withdraw its troops from Iraq under pressure from terrorists, Armitage said, "We might not like it, but we must respect it."

Zebari said Iraq needs support from the international community and the United Nations to strengthen the political process and help arrange free elections. He said the Iraqi government is preparing to announce the appointment of 43 ambassadors as it works to regain "its

natural position as a peaceful and helpful element in the international community."

Zebari said Iraq wants to reinforce its relations with all Arab countries. He said the French ambassador recently submitted his credentials and the German ambassador was received in Baghdad July 18.

Zebari also stated it was in Syria's interest to seal its border with Iraq and stop infiltration.

NORTH AMERICAN TRADE OFFICIALS HAIL NAFTA'S DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Leaders call for deepening North American economic integration

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been a success since its entry into force in 1994, and North American trade officials are committed to building on this success and deepening regional economic integration, according to a July 16 NAFTA Free Trade Commission joint statement.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Mexico's Secretary of Economy Fernando Canales and Canada's Minister of International Trade James Peterson released the joint statement, entitled "A Decade of Achievement," at the conclusion of a July 15-16 NAFTA Commission meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

"By any measure, NAFTA has been a success," the statement said. "The dismantling of barriers has led to increased trade and investment, growth in employment, and enhanced competitiveness."

The statement pointed to a more than 100 percent increase in three-way trade among the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as a cumulative increase of foreign direct investment of over \$1.7 trillion, as evidence of NAFTA's success. It also takes note of the success of the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation and the North American Agreement on Labor Co-operation.

The trade officials indicated that the NAFTA partners will not rest on these accomplishments, but are "commit-

ted to deepening economic integration in North America by building on the NAFTA to further benefit businesses, workers, and consumers.”

With virtually all tariffs and quotas on North American trade eliminated, the statement said, trade officials will look for additional ways to enhance trade and investment by lowering transaction costs and other administrative burdens. The officials will also explore ways to further integrate the North American economies through trade and to boost competitiveness, the statement noted.

“We want to ensure that NAFTA provides our countries with a competitive advantage in a world of global sourcing,” the statement added.

To this end, the trade officials reached a tentative agreement in San Antonio to liberalize the rules of origin for a broad range of foods and consumer and industrial products -- changes that will affect \$20 billion in trilateral trade. Trade officials will work to implement these changes while also pursuing further liberalization of rules of origin, the statement said.

In the joint statement, the trade officials also reiterated the NAFTA partners’ commitment to transparency and the effective operation of the agreement’s Dispute Settlement provisions.

The trade officials discussed the future prospects for the North American textile and apparel industries in San Antonio and encouraged the industries to come together and identify areas where private-sector cooperation could contribute to the develop of the sectors, according to the statement.

The trade officials also reaffirmed their commitment to achieving meaningful progress in 2004 in World Trade Organization (WTO) talks, noting that in agriculture talks, “we are on the verge of an historic agreement” that will, during this round, “eliminate export subsidies and discipline other forms of export competition in a parallel manner; substantially reduce and discipline trade-distorting domestic supports far in excess of what was achieved in previous negotiations; and substantially improve market access for all agricultural products, especially for developing countries.”

The trade officials said they are committed to completing the WTO frameworks for future talks on key issues before the end of July, and also reiterated their commitment to the Free Trade Area of the Americas process.

The next meeting of the NAFTA Commission will be held in Mexico in 2005, the statement said.

Please Note: Most texts and transcripts mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage www.usmission.ch. Select “Washington File” from the drop-down menu under “News.”