

DAILY BULLETIN

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U.S. CALLS FOR MORE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AID FOR IRAQ

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. briefs Security Council on Iraq..... 1

U.S. HAS FIVE PRIORITIES FOR U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Plans to promote democracy, economic freedom, and Middle East peace..... 2

POWELL SAYS U.S. CONFIDENT IN SIX-PARTY FRAMEWORK WITH N. KOREA

Secretary also discusses South Korea, Iran, Russia, Sudan, and Iraq..... 3

U.S., IAEA PROGRAM PROMOTES NUCLEAR PLANT SAFETY

Computerized training program could help prevent Chernobyl-like accident..... 4

U.S. ENGAGED IN EXTENSIVE OUTREACH ON NEW VISA WAIVER RULES

Visitors need machine-readable passport or U.S. visa beginning Oct. 26 4

U.S. CALLS FOR MORE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AID FOR IRAQ

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. briefs Security Council on Iraq

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Danforth urged nations to “contribute to the future of Iraq by providing financial assistance and troops to provide security for the U.N. in Iraq,” September 14.

In a report to the Security Council on the situation in Iraq, Danforth said that there is “real progress” in the efforts of the Multinational Force (MNF) to provide the means for a free, stable Iraq. But, he said, “great challenges remain,” including getting more U.N. international staff into the country to help Iraq prepare for and hold national elections by January 2005.

The Security Council held an open meeting September 14 to hear reports from the United States, Iraq, and Special Representative of the Secretary General for Iraq Ashraf Qazi on events over the past three months. All three emphasized the need for more international troops and funds to increase security for U.N. workers and headquarters in Iraq. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that he will not send a significant number of international staff into the country unless security is provided. To date, the U.N. has been unable to find nations willing to contribute troops for a battalion-size force for that effort. There are currently about 35 U.N. international staff in the country.

The ambassador said that the U.S. and the MNF look forward to increased U.N. activities that will promote the democratic process in Iraq.

“The assumption of governing authority by the Iraqi Interim Government marked the beginning of a new era for the people of Iraq,” Danforth said. “However, while the new government is widely supported by the public, the transfer did not mean an end to the challenges that face us. Well-armed insurgents and terrorists remain determined to assassinate leaders, take hostages, and attack MNF and Iraqi forces.”

Danforth, the chief U.S. envoy to the United Nations, also reported on the MNF’s work in training the Iraqi police, border police and facilities protection service as well as efforts to restore essential services to the Iraqi people.

U.S. HAS FIVE PRIORITIES FOR U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Plans to promote democracy, economic freedom, and Middle East peace

The United States plans to promote democracy within the United Nations as one of its five priorities for the U.N. General Assembly, a State Department official says.

Mark Lagon, deputy assistant secretary of state for international organizations affairs, laid out the U.S. goals for the 59th General Assembly in remarks at the Hudson Institute in Washington September 13. Lagon said U.S. priorities seek to move the United Nations back to its founding principles.

The United States will promote democracy using the Democracy Caucus to advance cooperation among democratic nations and to ensure that General Assembly resolutions and initiatives reflect international human rights standards and democratic principles.

The Democracy Caucus first appeared at the March 2004 U.N. Human Rights Commission session.

“By advancing democracy, the Caucus will in turn advance the U.N.’s basic aims of preserving peace, expanding economic development, and securing human

rights,” Lagon said. And he said the United States wants the Democracy Caucus to consider all social and human rights resolutions at the United Nations.

A second U.S. priority is advancing economic freedom, Lagon said.

“The U.N. and its members need to spend less time exhorting donors to provide more aid and more time promoting pro-growth policies,” he said. Sustainable growth depends on governments that promote the rule of law and property rights, and the elimination of corruption, he said.

Also on the U.S. agenda for the General Assembly is an effort to further the Middle East peace process. President Bush’s vision of Israel and a Palestinian state living in peace and security has been endorsed by the Security Council, Lagon said. The United States seeks to bring balance to the number and content of Middle East resolutions, which he said have been too numerous (21 in last year’s session) and too biased against Israel in past session.

Another goal in this session is ending trafficking in persons, particularly child sex tourism. The United States expects to highlight this issue, by asking governments to expand and invigorate anti-trafficking efforts. Rescuing trafficking victims and prosecuting traffickers is a critical need, Lagon said.

He added that international partnerships are vital in this effort, since human trafficking crosses national boundaries.

A fifth U.S. priority is a ban on human cloning. The United States will join a large group of states co-sponsoring a resolution, proposed by Costa Rica, to draft an international convention against human cloning, Lagon said.

Lagon also discussed U.S. attitudes toward multilateralism, as well as examples of U.S. multilateral endeavors in food aid, HIV/AIDS funding, and refugee relief.

POWELL SAYS U.S. CONFIDENT IN SIX-PARTY FRAMEWORK WITH N. KOREA

Secretary also discusses South Korea, Iran, Russia, Sudan, and Iraq

Although the United States remains confident in the six-party framework for ending the nuclear weapons program in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North Koreans are stalling on resuming talks that had been set for the end of September, says Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State.

During a September 14 interview with Reuters, Powell observed that North Korean officials have been "reluctant to move forward."

"They've been stalling," he said. "Nevertheless, we still have confidence in the six-party framework."

The six-party talks include officials from North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Russia and Japan.

The secretary said the United States has shown "considerable flexibility" in addressing North Korean concerns. "We're committed to a security agreement, which is what the North Koreans said they needed," he said. And the Japanese and the South Koreans have indicated a willingness to provide some assistance on very short notice as soon as North Korea takes action to end its nuclear weapons programs, he said.

Regarding recent explosions in North Korea that some observers surmised might have been a nuclear weapons test, Powell said that available information is consistent with North Korean reports of demolition work for a hydroelectric facility.

When asked about South Korea's uranium enrichment and plutonium experiment, Powell said he would wait for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to make a judgment as to how to handle this matter.

On Iran's nuclear programs, Powell said the United States will also wait to see the IAEA's decision, but he added that "we can't just keep having [IAEA] Board meetings with no action taken by the IAEA, which is an agent of the United Nations."

"Ultimately, if there is not satisfaction on the part of Iran, it has to go to the Security Council," he said.

Powell said it is Iran's responsibility to satisfy the international community that they are not developing a nuclear weapon. "Full openness," he said, "is not hard to do."

The secretary also said that the United States is not interested in bilateral talks with Iran regarding their nuclear program.

"We just don't want to make it a U.S. and Iran issue," he said. "It is an Iran-international community issue."

On Russia, Powell expressed some concerns about the government's actions in response to recent terrorist attacks inside its borders. Although the United States understands the need to fight against terrorism, Powell said, "I think one has to strike a proper balance to make sure that you don't move in a direction that takes you away from the democratic reforms or the democratic process that you are committed to."

Regarding the humanitarian situation in Darfur, Sudan, Powell said he has not seen any real improvement since he declared genocide is taking place in the region. He said Sudan's leaders need to do "a lot more" to reduce attacks by the militant Jingaweit.

He called for the U.N. Security Council to speak with "a clear voice" to the Sudanese government about their need to allow humanitarian aid and improve security for monitors. Sanctions, he said, are a possibility if Sudan "does not act in an appropriate manner in response to the desire of the international community."

In response to questions about Iraq, Powell said that while there are "some difficult areas" in Baghdad, and there are some "challenges" in southern cities in the Sunni Triangle and in the north, the United States is confident that its military -- working with the Iraqi security forces -- will be able to restore order.

"It's a question of going after these insurgents, defeating them, bringing them under control, and then going forward with the [Iraqi] elections" scheduled for January of 2005, he said.

U.S., IAEA PROGRAM PROMOTES NUCLEAR PLANT SAFETY

Computerized training program could help prevent Chernobyl-like accident

Engineers at the U.S. Department of Energy Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), along with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), have produced a computerized training program that could help prevent an accident like the 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, according to a September 13 INEEL press release.

The training module is a customization of RELAP5-3D -- a computer code developed at INEEL to simulate possible accidents in water-cooled nuclear reactors -- that focuses on the safety needs of many countries such as Russia, Slovakia and Lithuania.

"We've participated with many countries in Central and Eastern Europe to provide them with training that has contributed significantly to the growth of safety in their nuclear reactors," said Mike Modro of INEEL. "We've shared our training, and now they are establishing independent safety thinking at the power plants in those countries."

RELAP5-3D simulates reactor emergencies and is used to analyze accidents in water-cooled nuclear power plants and related systems. The code can be applied to a full range of postulated reactor accidents and can assess safety needs before the reactor is built.

The training module, made up of 5 digital video discs (DVDs), includes audio and visual presentations of RELAP5-3D training materials. The materials have been translated into Russian.

Using the DVDs and the Internet, small numbers of students at different locations can receive RELAP5-3D training without the expense of holding a large training class at a single location.

Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory INEEL (<http://www.inel.gov>)
INEEL Newsdesk Home (<http://newsdesk.inel.gov>)

U.S. ENGAGED IN EXTENSIVE OUTREACH ON NEW VISA WAIVER RULES

Visitors need machine-readable passport or U.S. visa beginning Oct. 26

The United States is engaged in extensive outreach and will continue an ongoing effort to make certain that Visa Waiver Program travelers are aware of a requirement effective October 26 that they must possess machine-readable passports in order to enter the country without a visa, according to State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher in a September 13 statement.

Beginning October 26, all travelers from 27 countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program must present either a machine-readable passport or a valid U.S. visa upon entry to the United States.

"We are confident that Visa Waiver travelers will not be deterred or inconvenienced by this change," said Boucher.

Further information on the visa waiver program is available at:
http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_novisa_waiver.html

Following is the text of the Boucher statement on the machine-readable passport requirement:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
September 13, 2004

Machine-Readable Passport Requirement

The State Department is continuing its efforts to notify visitors of the new guidelines for entry into the United States. As the October 26 deadline for Visa Waiver Program travelers to possess machine-readable passports approaches, our embassies and consulates have engaged in extensive outreach to make certain that eligible individuals are aware of this requirement. We are confident that Visa Waiver travelers will not be deterred or inconvenienced by this change.

In September 2003, the Secretary granted a postponement until October 26, 2004, as the date by which Visa Waiver Program travelers from 21 countries must present a machine-readable passport at a port of entry to be

admitted to the U.S. without a visa. Since the granting of this one-year waiver, the governments of Visa Waiver countries have been working to meet this requirement, and we believe that they have dedicated appropriate resources to ensure that their nationals possess machine-readable passports. In addition, on a case-by-case basis, immigration officers at ports of entry may give a one-time waiver to those carrying non-machine-readable passports.

Nationals of the five countries that did not request -- and therefore did not receive -- a waiver of the machine-readable passport requirement, Andorra, Brunei, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and Slovenia, have been presenting only machine-readable passports since October 1, 2003.

Belgian nationals who wish to travel under the auspices of the Visa Waiver Program have been required to present a machine-readable passport since May 15, 2003. This requirement was stipulated in the Department of Justice's review of Belgium's continued eligibility to participate in the Visa Waiver Program in February 2003.

In the coming weeks we will continue our on-going effort to make all Visa Waiver travelers aware of the machine-readable passport requirement to avoid any possible disruptions of travel