



Daily Press Briefing  
**Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman**  
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#### INDEX:

#### IRAN

Nuclear Activities Allegedly Threatening / EU-3 Consultations  
 Common Front / US Approach to Nuclear Issue  
 Issue of Enticement / Query on Comparison to North Korea  
 Signing of Russian □ Iranian Agreement / US □ Russian Discussions  
 IAEA Quarterly Meeting / Agenda / Comprehensive Report

#### LEBANON/SYRIA

US Reaction to Resignation of Lebanese Government  
 UN Security Council Resolution 1559 / Constitutional Process  
 Disarming of Militias / Deputy Assistant Secretary David Satterfield Meeting

#### EGYPT

Incarceration of Ayman Nour  
 Delay of Planned Visit to Egypt / Meetings with Senior Egyptian Officials

#### ISRAEL/PALESTINIANS/SYRIA

Suicide Bombing in Tel Aviv / Meeting with Palestinian Leadership  
 US Reaction to Comments by Israel on Syria

#### IRAQ

Issue of Foreign Regime Elements in Syria  
 Special Tribunals

#### CANADA

Secretary Rice □'s Visit / Future Summit on Free Trade Agreement

#### INDONESIA

Certification of International Military Education and Training (IMET)  
 Indonesian Military Cooperation with US in Murder Investigation

#### TRANSCRIPT:

1:35 p.m. EST

**MR. ERELI:** Let's wait for our wire friends to get here. Wire friends.

**QUESTION:** Here's a wire friend.

**MR. ERELI:** We'll start with our wire friends today. Do you have a question?

**QUESTION:** Yes I do, oddly enough. (Laughter.) Can you comment on the report in *The Washington Post* about the new initiative that the United States might be preparing with Iran to offer them incentives, joining the Europeans to offer them incentives to give up their nukes?

**MR. ERELI:** What we're doing is in the wake of President's trip to Europe, the excellent discussions he had there, as well as the Secretary's earlier trip to Europe and our engagement with the EU-3 and our discussion with them of how things are going in their efforts to bring about a cessation of Iran's uranium enrichment program, is we are looking at ways that we can support those efforts.

The important issue that I'd like -- that I think that we should underscore, however, is less a question of tactics than one of broad strategy, and the broad strategy is important. There is a convergence of views between the EU-3 and the United States that Iran's nuclear activities are threatening and that they need to -- that together we can work to ensure that whatever Iran does, it is in compliance with international obligations, it is transparent and it is -- it does not pose a threat to any of us.

They have -- as you know, the E-3 is in the process of working with Iran to suspend and eventually cease uranium enrichment programs. They, as I said earlier, talked about some ideas with the President. We are back here looking at those ideas, looking at what steps we might take that is supportive of their efforts. They can help us together meet our common goal of containing and rolling back a program that is in frankly nobody's interest.

As far as what the details of those discussions are, I'm not in a position to say. As I said, they are ongoing. I think we've been clear that no decisions have been made yet and I expect that Secretary Rice will be discussing further some of the ideas, some of the points that we've been talking about internally, with her European counterparts during her current visit to Europe.

**QUESTION:** Can I just follow up on that?

**MR. ERELI:** Mm-hmm.

**QUESTION:** Without going into the details, would it then be safe to say, based upon what the *Post* was saying, that the United States is looking at getting more actively engaged in this process?

**MR. ERELI:** Well, I don't know if that's -- if I would agree with that characterization of the article. I would say we have been very actively engaged in the process all along. From the very beginning of the EU-3's approach to Iran, which goes back many years, we have been consulting closely with them, we have been sharing our points of view. We have -- they have been keeping us informed on how they've been -- how their discussions have been going.

In the past we've seen Iran make promises to suspend enrichment activity that have -- that they have then broken. We're at another stage now where they've engaged in another suspension. I think we all want to see an end to enrichment activity, which doesn't serve any useful peaceful purpose. I think the Europeans are at a stage now in their discussions where they have floated us certain ideas. Those are the ideas that the President discussed. Based on those discussions we're looking at ways we can help meet our common goal.

**QUESTION:** Can you say for sure, can the government say for sure, that Iran has regressed to the point where they are now in the nuclear weapons business? Some of us heard a former desk officer who's written a book, who's a very prominent retired diplomat, Henry Precht, last week say that Iran is doing what India did. I mean, that development, nuclear development, is a sovereign act that countries all want to progress and develop things. You're convinced -- you said there's no peaceful application -- Iran is over the line now, what they're doing is harmful and is geared to developing nuclear weapons, you're saying?

**MR. ERELI:** It has long been the position of the United States that there's no logical need for a peaceful nuclear energy program in Iran, given its huge gas reserves and oil reserves. We've also been very clear that based on what we've seen from Iran and based on the scope and the nature of its program, that it is our considered judgment that it is a cover for a nuclear weapons program. And I think we have -- that there are -- that that concern has gained currency in the international community and certainly is something that informs the policies and actions of a number of countries, which is what has helped us get to the point where we are today where you have a growing and strengthening international consensus that what Iran is doing is troublesome, that Iran has been deceptive of about its activities for a number of years, that questions that the international community has remain unanswered, that efforts to find information continue to be blocked, they continue to be evasive; and that as a result, one needs to maintain a united front and continue -- and not let go of the issue.

**QUESTION:** And you think you have a united front with the Europeans, who are progressing along in a negotiating track, and you are progressing along a track of someday hoping to go to the UN and finding enough support to apply economic sanctions on Iran? You think you can have the world -- this international community can have a productive outcome of their joint strategy if their tactics are so disparate?

**MR. ERELI:** I would say that we have -- we are proceeding along a common front of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons, which is something we all share a common interest in and recognize that shared interest.

Tammy.

**QUESTION:** Can I switch to --

**QUESTION:** Can we stay in Iran?

**MR. ERELI:** Iran.

**QUESTION:** After listening to European leaders on this trip, would the Administration consider giving incentives to Iran like, for example, the joining the WTO, as we heard?

**MR. ERELI:** This isn't a question of incentives or inducements or carrots or sticks. This is a question of coordinating our position with our allies to achieve a common goal, which is an Iran that cannot develop nuclear weapons and cannot threaten its neighbors and cannot destabilize the region. We are -- where we are at the present time is that the European Union is working with Iran and with our support to arrive at a cessation of uranium enrichment activities. That's where the focus has to be. It's not a question about offering incentives or other tactical issues. The issue is what can we do together to achieve this goal.

And more importantly, it's about Iran being responsive to the concerns of the international community. It's not just the United States, it's not just the EU-3; the IAEA Board of Governors has had a number of reports and a number of resolutions expressing concern about Iran's program, asking for answers to questions, asking for information which Iran continues to withhold or obfuscate on.

So I wouldn't look at it, I wouldn't look at the story, in terms of the United States looking to offer incentives for Iran to do what it should do, but rather I would look at it as the United States and its European partners as part of a more -- as part of a broader effort to bring Iran -- to bring Iranian behavior in line with what the international community expects of it.

**QUESTION:** Adam, the President said that he was getting good advice from his European counterparts and so on on this issue. And on the issue of enticement to Iran, wouldn't it be prudent for the United States to really reach out to Iran, not only on the nuclear issue but also to drive or poke a hole or drive a wedge in sort of Syrian-Iranian relations at a time when the Administration is trying to isolate Syria?

**MR. ERELI:** That's not our policy.

**QUESTION:** But how do you explain it?

**MR. ERELI:** How do I explain what?

**QUESTION:** That North Korea, which by all accounts is far more advanced in a nuclear program than Iran is, you talk to as part of a setting with other concerned nations. Here in Iran you have a different set of concerned nations and you don't join those talks. I mean, I guess --

**MR. ERELI:** Well, I don't think you can --

**QUESTION:** -- that you should say there isn't a cookie-cutter foreign policy.

**MR. ERELI:** I don't think you can compare the six-party process with the EU-3 engagement. You can't compare it for a whole number of reasons. One, because of where North Korea is in its program. Two, because of the scope and the nature of the discussions. Three, because of the way it's structured compared to where Iran is. I mean, we've talked about this before several weeks ago. In fact, I remember we went into at some length. And the point I made then is the point I made now. We're dealing with -- it's a lot more complex than just a cookie-cutter approach. But we're dealing with two very different situations. We're dealing with two very different countries. We're dealing with two very different programs. We're dealing with two very different threats. And we're dealing with two very different, I would say, diplomatic realities.

And as a result, the approach we take to each is different because the problem we have to deal with is different. You can't just say oh, well, you've got a nuclear problem here and you have a nuclear problem there and you should take the same approach. Well, they're different nuclear problems, they're different countries and they're different threats.

**QUESTION:** I just mean the notion that there's something about Iran as a government that is -- that you're so -- I don't know what the heck's the word, I can't think of the word -- meaning you can't sit in the same room with them. You're allergic to Iran but you're not allergic to North Korea. You can talk to North Korea, but when Iran comes up you run away.

**MR. ERELI:** Well, at this point there's no -- at this point there's no, in our view -- the question of us sitting with Iran is not necessarily something that's going to contribute to moving this process forward. We've always said that on given issues and given circumstances we leave open the possibility of talking to Iran if it advances our -- if it addresses those issues and if it serves our interests and if the President thinks it's the right thing to do. So we've never said never. We've just said that as a panacea that's thrown out there that somehow is going to cause the scales to fall from their eyes and reverse what has been a consistent and persistent trend of irresponsible international behavior, that's a little bit farfetched.

Yes, ma'am.

**QUESTION:** Is the U.S. satisfied that the Russian agreement signed with Iran over the weekend will prevent any sort of nuclear materials from being used in a weapons program? And also, do you have any sort of readout on the IAEA meeting today and what the U.S. position is on what's going on there today on Iran?

**MR. ERELI:** On the subject of the Russian-Iranian agreement on providing fuel for Bushehr, we have not seen the agreement so I really can't speak to it with regard to what its terms are and what its implications are.

I would make a couple of observations, broad observations, however. One is that this is a deal that's been in the works for some time; number two, that, again, the United States has had longstanding concerns about Iran's nuclear program and that the ultimate purposes of that program, that we have shared -- we have spoken to Russia about those concerns and that in our discussions with the Russians we believe we have a convergence of views that Russia understands and accepts the dangers that -- posed by an Iranian nuclear program and that is proceeding on that basis.

Specifically, I would note that we have discussed the issue of providing nuclear fuel to the Iranian plant and the importance of taking back spent fuel. We have discussed this with the Russians. The Russians agree with us that Iran must not gain a nuclear weapons capability.

So with all that in mind, I think that moving forward there is a convergence and a compatibility of views between the United States and Russia about the problem posed by Iran's nuclear program and about the importance of ensuring that all spent fuel must be returned to Russia and the importance of Iran complying with all its known proliferation treaty safeguards and resolving outstanding concerns of the international community.

**QUESTION:** And on the IAEA meeting today?

**MR. ERELI:** And the IAEA meeting. I would note that the IAEA Board of Governors is meeting this week. It's going to -- Iran is not a formal agenda item. It will be addressing a broad range of issues and also deal with safeguards issues, including Iran.

In his opening statement on Iran, IAEA Director General ElBaradei told the Board that the IAEA is continuing to investigate unresolved concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program and it's continuing to verify whether Iran is implementing a full suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. He went on to reiterate the IAEA's call on Iran to provide full transparency and he noted that in some cases Iran has still not provided information or cooperation with the IAEA.

We would expect in the coming days that other IAEA officials will be providing a more detailed briefing to the Board on Iran's nuclear activities and we certainly welcome those briefings.

**QUESTION:** And a quick follow-up?

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned that the impetus for talks is also dependent on how far along Iran is compared to North Korea.

**MR. ERELI:** No, I didn't say that.

**QUESTION:** Well, I mean, that --

**MR. ERELI:** I didn't -- if I did, I didn't mean to suggest it. I said they're two completely different things and that one -- the approach you take with one does not necessarily mean that's the approach you should take with the other. I also said on the subject of talking with Iran we've never ruled it out but -- in the right circumstances, but I urged sort of caution and realism to those who see it as a step that would bring some kind of breakthrough and some kind of reversal of what has historically been a very negative trend.

**QUESTION:** Adam?

**MR. ERELI:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Can I phrase this another way? There's a headline today that the Russians rebuffed the United States on Iran and we've seen this whole tract with North Korea over several years, this tract with Iran on the nuclear power plant. Was Russia, since they lost the Ukraine within the last two months, trying to put together weapons and military bases both in Iran and Syria, and that's why you have this uncertainty and today the Government of Lebanon just fell and what --

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah, you're reading in a lot of stuff. I would --

**QUESTION:** In other words, are the Russians behind all this?

**MR. ERELI:** No, the Russians are not behind all this. I wouldn't try to make connections that aren't necessarily there and your question is very speculative. What I would simply say is to reiterate my earlier comments that this deal with Iran has been in the works for some time, that we and the Russians have had a number of discussions both bilaterally and within the context of the IAEA about our shared concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program and that we have also discussed in great detail what kind of safeguards and assurances and guarantees would be needed to make such a deal palatable.

**QUESTION:** So does that mean the U.S. does not disapprove of the deal --

**MR. ERELI:** Again --

**QUESTION:** In fact, it's all right if the safeguards are implemented?

**MR. ERELI:** Again, it's not -- I'm not here to approve or disapprove of deals. What we're here to do is to underscore to the international community how we view the Iranian program, to try to generate a consensus and a common approach to that problem, and it's a problem that concerns not just us but a variety of countries, especially those neighboring Iran like Russia. And we believe we've made significant progress on that. We believe that there is a commonality of views and a common approach to this and one that -- and all countries that feel a stake in this are acting -- or should act responsibly, should act in ways that not only help the international community but serve their own interests.

**QUESTION:** Adam?

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** You've got a commonality of views with the Europeans. Does that mean that you're not going to press at this IAEA meeting the issue of the Iranian nuclear program to move to the Security Council?

**MR. ERELI:** As I said, at this meeting, in this quarterly meeting, Iran is not an agenda item. There is another quarterly meeting in June, and based on developments between now and June I think that we would, you know, we would have to see, you know, what those developments are and what position we're going to take.

**QUESTION:** So you're postponing now until June the possibility of going to the UN? I mean, you kept having these markers. I'm not criticizing. Things are complicated in this world. But you've had the IAEA meetings as markers, let's see what happens when the IAEA meets and then we'll decide what to do.

**MR. ERELI:** Right, right.

**QUESTION:** Now the IAEA is meeting and you say since Iran is not an agenda item it's not the kind of meeting that is a marker, let's see what happens in June.

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah. I don't want this to sound overly bureaucratic, but what triggers a discussion of Iran at the IAEA is a report from the Director General.

**QUESTION:** True.

**MR. ERELI:** A comprehensive report on Iran's activities. The Director General is not presenting such a report at this meeting so therefore the subject of what response, what actions to take in response to the report, is not something we're looking at in February. Now, the Director General may report -- and I don't want to get ahead of myself, I don't want to say will, but may report -- on Iran's nuclear activities at the next quarterly meeting, which I guess is in June. And that would be the occasion to discuss the report and take whatever actions the Board feels is appropriate based on what the Director General tells the Board. That's not happening in this meeting.

**QUESTION:** So you're boxed in. You can't go to the UN in the foreseeable future because, first of all, you're not sure the Director General agrees with you and you're trying to, you know, get him out of there anyhow, so you're waiting on somebody who isn't about to make it an agenda item and you can't move until there's consideration of Iran's program by the IA -- it sounds like you're boxed -- you've been stalemated.

**MR. ERELI:** No, I wouldn't say that at all. I would simply say that at this point in time, given where things are, there is not a basis to debate what actions to take with Iran. We talked about it in previous meetings. We'll probably talk about it in future meetings. But at this meeting at this time there's, I think, a consensus view that we don't have the kind of information and we're not at the stage in dealing with Iran that we want to have that kind of a discussion.

**QUESTION:** Can we move to Lebanon?

**MR. ERELI:** Do you have Iran?

**QUESTION:** No, Lebanon.

**MR. ERELI:** All right. Lebanon.

**QUESTION:** Can we move to -- do you have a statement or can we ask you a question?

**MR. ERELI:** Sure. Why don't you ask a question.

**QUESTION:** Well, as you know, the Lebanese Government just resigned. So, can you tell us your reaction to that? And also, the opposition saying that they're not going to stop the demonstrations until the Syrian troops withdraw. Do you welcome that? Do you --

**MR. ERELI:** What does the opposition say?

**QUESTION:** They're not going to stop -- they're going to carry on with demonstrations until the Syrian forces withdraw from Lebanon. Is this a good thing, you know, considering the President asked for it?

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah. Obviously, this is a late-breaking development. We're watching -- we're watching what's happening in Lebanon with great interest. I think Under Secretary Dobriansky today coined the phrase "Cedar Revolution" in placing Lebanon in the context of events we've seen around the world, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Purple Revolution in Baghdad, and now we've got the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon.

What does that mean? It means that for the past weeks we've seen the people of Lebanon fill the streets of Beirut, fill the streets of other cities in Lebanon, calling for their country back, calling for Lebanese sovereignty in Lebanon, calling for a political process that is free of foreign pressure, foreign interference, foreign intimidation, and calling for foreign troops to leave Lebanon.

That is what we've been calling for for some time. It's what the international community's been calling for in UN Security Council Resolution 1559. We share -- we the United States, we the international community -- share the Lebanese people's desire for the extension of Lebanese sovereignty over all of Lebanon's territory and the disarming of militias and the conduct of elections, parliamentary and otherwise, that are free, fair, transparent and are not marred by intimidation and violence.

There's a constitutional process in Lebanon. We have every expectation that that constitutional process will be followed and that a new government will be able to fulfill the desires and the wishes of the people of Lebanon as they've been expressing them so eloquently for these past several weeks.

**QUESTION:** You've seen these events, what's happening in Lebanon and what we saw in Egypt in the weekend. Do you see it fitting into the vision of the President of basically toppling all these dictatorship all over the Middle East and there is a wind of change that we have seen it in Eastern Europe and now he will make the comparison to the Middle East?

**MR. ERELI:** Well, I think what's important to point out is that what's happening in Lebanon is happening because -- is a reflection of the desires of the people of Lebanon. And what President Bush has said, I think, is being borne out here, is that -- is the natural state of human beings to be free and who want to be free. And that's -- and what we're seeing in Lebanon is happening not because that's -- not necessarily because that's what the United States says, but that's -- but because that's the truth and it validates cause and effect, it validates what we have been saying.

And what does it mean to be free? It means not to have foreign forces occupying your country. It means not to have foreign political entities saying who's going to serve, who's going to lead the country, who's going to run the country. And it means that the rule of law and peaceful expression of dissent are respected and serve as the basis for political life.

**QUESTION:** Adam, suppose that the Syrians withdraw, and you mentioned disarming the militias. Do you expect the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese army to disarm the various militias? Would that be the next step?

**MR. ERELI:** That is what 1559 calls for: extension of authority of the Lebanese Government through all parts of Lebanon and disarming of militias. You've got to have central control. The organs of the state need to do their job, need to be respected, and need to not only to be responsible and exercise authority but seen to be responsible in exercising authority.

**QUESTION:** And what if the Lebanese Government expressed that it is unable to disarm the militias? Could they turn to the U.S. or the United Nations to send a multinational force to do so?

**MR. ERELI:** I would say first things first. Let's get to a situation where we've got a Lebanese government that's sovereign over all parts of its territory.

Yes sir.

**QUESTION:** Excuse me. Syrian Government has said today that what's happening in Lebanon is an internal affair. What --

**MR. ERELI:** Which government said that?

**QUESTION:** Syrian Government.

**MR. ERELI:** Said that what's happening in Lebanon is an internal affair?

**QUESTION:** Yeah.

**MR. ERELI:** Well, yeah. The dismissal of a government is an internal affair. But what I would note is that unfortunately, for far too long, the domestic politics of Lebanon have been marred by foreign interference so that it's very difficult to say that what happens in Lebanon is completely an internal affair since outsiders have had their hand in the pot for so long.

**QUESTION:** Well, would U.S. Government support the opposition since they're calling for the same very thing that the Administration are calling for?

**MR. ERELI:** I hadn't seen what the opposition is calling for so I --

**QUESTION:** Withdrawing all the Syrian troops. Immediate withdrawal of the --

**MR. ERELI:** Well, that's what UN Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for. And so there certainly is a convergence of views there.

**QUESTION:** Do you support them?

**MR. ERELI:** We support those who want to see a full and immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** David Satterfield is in Lebanon today. Can you tell us about meetings that he's had with Lebanese officials, whether he knew about the resignation in advance, whether he (inaudible)?

**MR. ERELI:** Deputy Assistant Secretary David Satterfield met today with Lebanese Foreign Minister Hammoud and visited the residence of the slain Prime Minister, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. He did not have advance knowledge. My understanding, having spoken with our Near Eastern Affairs Bureau officials here, is that he did not have advance knowledge of this resignation, that he learned about it at the same time as -- contemporaneous with the public learning about it.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Can we go to Egypt for a second, please?

**MR. ERELI:** Are we done with Lebanon? Sure.

**QUESTION:** Egypt's arrest of a political opposition figure, Ayman Nour -- I think that's how it's pronounced. The Foreign Minister told CNN today that he does not see Secretary Rice's canceling of her planned visit to Egypt as anything connected with that. Can you tell us how the U.S. is expressing its displeasure at Egypt's arrest of this person?

**MR. ERELI:** The United States has made clear its views to -- about the continuing incarceration of Ayman Nour very clear in a number of ways. The Secretary has obviously spoken to it publicly, most recently in her meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, I think about ten days ago. Assistant Secretary Burns spoke to the Egyptian Ambassador here in Washington on February 24th and last week our Ambassador in Cairo, Ambassador Welch, had a number of meetings with senior Egyptian officials to underscore our concern about not only Ayman Nour's continuing incarceration but reports that his health was deteriorating while he was in custody and to again underscore the seriousness with which we view this issue.

**QUESTION:** Is her trip there, the delay of the planned trip, related to the U.S.'s expressing its displeasure?

**MR. ERELI:** I think no, I think Secretary Boucher spoke to the scheduling of her travel when he announced the London trip last Friday and laid out pretty clearly what our thinking was on that. I don't have much more to add to it.

I'm sorry, you had a question?

**QUESTION:** Can we switch to Canada? Are you in Egypt?

**QUESTION:** No, I wanted --

**MR. ERELI:** I think we'll be in the Middle East for a little bit more.

**QUESTION:** On the Secretary's trip, did she raise or is she going to raise with the Palestinian President the issue of the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and who bears responsibility for that? Do you have a statement on that?

**MR. ERELI:** Well, the subject of the bomb -- Friday's bombing is certain to come up and we will underscore our very, very strong view that it is essential that the Palestinian leadership take immediate, credible steps to find those responsible for the attack and to bring them to justice. It's difficult to overstate the importance of taking concrete actions in a timely way in order to create the kind of environment for peacemaking that we need, and we do note that the Palestinian leadership has condemned the attack. That's, I think, important and welcome.

What we will be talking about is specific steps -- the need for specific steps and specific actions that follow up that rhetoric with tangible movement that shows a commitment and a capability of acting against those responsible for these kinds of attacks.

**QUESTION:** But, Adam, 72 hours have elapsed since the bombing. Beyond condemnation, what steps are they taking? Did they tell you what steps are they taking? Have they arrested certain people? Have the --

**MR. ERELI:** I don't have a laundry list for you, Said.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Adam, Israeli officials have implicated Syria in the attack. Do you have any evidence to support that?

**MR. ERELI:** I've seen the Israeli statements. I don't have anything -- how should I put it? -- to -- any information from our side that corroborates, substantiates them. Clearly, from our point of view, what we've said consistently and would repeat in this instance is that Syria has a demonstrated track record of allowing international terrorist groups to remain in and operate from its territory and this is a problem. It's a problem for us. It's a problem for everybody, frankly, who wants to see peace in the region because these groups are opposed to peace, these groups advocate and use violence to destroy the prospects for peace, and Syria is involved with them. So we have time and again called on the Syrian Government to take concrete action and have made the point, I think very, very clearly, very loudly, that you can't -- Syria can't have it both ways. It can't say it's an advocate of peace and it supports the peace process, and at the same time harbor and support organizations who exist for the sole purpose of destroying that peace process.

Yes ma'am.

**QUESTION:** Did you work on the recent handover of Saddam's half-brother by the Syrian authority to the Iraqis as a goodwill gesture on their behalf?

**MR. ERELI:** I don't have much to say about that, frankly. And the reason is because I don't have a lot of details about what happened and how it happened. So I'll simply say that the issue of foreign regime elements operating in Syria is something that we continue to press the Syrian Government on. But for details on what happened in this particular case, I'm going to have to just beg off for the time being.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Also on Iraq, a special tribunal has said that five former members of Saddam Hussein's regime is going to go on trial for crimes against humanity, including a different half-brother of Saddam Hussein. Do you all have any information of this or have the Iraqis talked to you about this at all?

**MR. ERELI:** I don't have anything on that specific report. The -- Iraq's special tribunals are Iraqi-run and Iraqi-administered, so for their decisions on who to prosecute and when, I'd refer to you to them. Obviously, the United States as well as other international actors have been providing assistance to Iraq's special tribunal but that's technical assistance, legal assistance, sort of other forms of support, but the decision-making on how to handle the trials and timing is firmly in the Iraqis' hands.

**QUESTION:** I have one more question.

**MR. ERELI:** Sure.

**QUESTION:** Any news on the UAE diplomat that was arrested? Anything new?

**MR. ERELI:** I don't have any update. I'll see if --

**QUESTION:** No waiver, no --

**MR. ERELI:** I don't have any update on it for you.

Yes. Oh, Canada, obviously.

**QUESTION:** On Canada, yes.

**MR. ERELI:** What's the song, Oh Canada?

**QUESTION:** What's that?

**MR. ERELI:** What's the song?

**QUESTION:** Oh, yeah. Blame Canada? (Laughter.)

**MR. ERELI:** No, no. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** Just quickly, I'm wondering --

**MR. ERELI:** Too bad about the hockey season. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** Yeah, yeah. (Laughter.) We're all mourning still.

Regarding Canada's decision on missile defense, I'm wondering if that decision will delay the upcoming visit of Rice in regards to planning a future summit on the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas between Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

**MR. ERELI:** Yeah. Well, since nothing was fixed, it's hard to delay. I think the planning is still going forward on that. We weren't ready to announce -- we hadn't been ready to announce something so there are discussions going about -- going back and forth over timing, but it'll happen when the stars are all aligned in the right way.

**QUESTION:** Can you tell me, has Rice spoken to anyone in Canada, to the foreign affairs --

**MR. ERELI:** Not that I'm aware of, no.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Thank you.

**MR. ERELI:** Yes. George.

**QUESTION:** There are reports that the Secretary did something to ease restrictions on military ties with Indonesia.

**MR. ERELI:** There's a statement. Did you see the statement?

**QUESTION:** No, I didn't. I must've missed it. When did you send it out?

**MR. ERELI:** Put out the statement -- was it Sunday morning or Saturday? Saturday. That's what I thought. Saturday morning, put out a statement announcing Secretary Rice's decision to certify International Military Education and Training for Indonesia under the International Military Education and Training Program. As you will recall, current restrictions on this program were put in place and legislated by Congress following the August 2, 2002 murders of two American citizens and the insufficient cooperation by the Indonesian military investigating those murders.

In the past months and years, Indonesia has been cooperating actively in the investigation resulting in the indictment of Anthonius Wamang and has -- we've been working together productively with Indonesia in investigating the full scope of this crime, and as a result of this cooperation we have restarted IMET training with Indonesia.

**QUESTION:** Do you know how many Indonesian soldiers are going to be trained?

**MR. ERELI:** Yet to be seen because I think funding levels haven't yet been determined. And I would also note that even for those soldiers -- even for those participants in the program, whether it's in Indonesia or elsewhere, there's a very thorough human rights vetting process that goes -- that has to be undertaken before they're allowed to participate.

**QUESTION:** Okay, thank you.

(The briefing was completed at 2:10 pm)

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**DPB # 32**

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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