

Richard Boucher, Spokesman
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QUESTION: Richard, on that same subject. Part of this Saudi proposal was that the international community, possibly the Security Council, should offer an amnesty to the vast majority of Iraqi military and political leaders, leaving aside, of course, the top ones, as a way to turn them against Saddam.

Is that something that the United States could support if you felt that it might produce desirable results?

MR. BOUCHER: This is very speculative at this moment. This sort of goes down to the questions of, "What do you offer if he's willing to leave?" Well, let's see whether he's willing to leave. Let's see who's there when something happens, if something happens. These are matters for Iraqis, for the international community to decide, and at this point to start making offers of something that's quite hypothetical is just not productive.

QUESTION: But, Richard, don't you think that giving some of these generals or political leaders some guarantees in advance that they wouldn't be prosecuted might spur them to take action that would be favorable to the U.S.?

MR. BOUCHER: Well, I think we have made quite clear that people should refrain from taking actions that constitute war crimes, because we do believe in accountability and we do believe that people need to be held to account for their actions. But to kind of speculate on who might do what and what that would mean for their future, I think really depends on many things as events may or may not unfold. And there is no way to speculate accurately at this point, particularly for someone in my position.

Betsy.

QUESTION: Can you say whether the U.S. is preparing documentation that could be used in any war crimes tribunal against Saddam Hussein if he were to survive, be captured, be toppled, whatever?

MR. BOUCHER: We, for many years, have had an effort underway, and we have done this to a great extent funding NGOs. There's the group Indict in Great Britain, I think that you know that we have provided money to that's been collecting information on possible crimes by Saddam Hussein and his regime.

We have not moved at this stage to a formal accusation of war crimes, but certainly it's a topic that we have made sure we collect all information on and that we keep under active advisement.

Terri.

QUESTION: Wait, wait, wait. Can I ask about that? And I realize you're going to say it's all speculative, hypothetical and down the road, but, presumably, if Saddam was charged with these kinds of

things, he would be tried by your favorite institution, the International Criminal Court, correct?

MR. BOUCHER: No.

QUESTION: Or do you think that there could be another ad hoc --

MR. BOUCHER: I think if you look around the world these days, there's dozens of different examples of ways that countries have brought people to account.

QUESTION: But those were all pre-ICC. So --

MR. BOUCHER: I think if you look around the world these days, there's still dozens of ways that people can be brought to account. And as I said, what, when, how, which charges, who, would ultimately, depending on how events unfold, be questions that Iraqis and other members of the international community could address.

QUESTION: Well, when you say around the world, these examples, you're talking like truth and reconciliation commissions or what the Cambodians are trying to do with the UN for the Khmer Rouge?

MR. BOUCHER: And what the Sierra Leoneans are doing and what's done in Rwanda, what's done in Yugoslavia. There are a lot of different examples.

QUESTION: Okay. But the U.S. is not -- would not oppose Saddam being tried by the ICC, would they? Would you?

MR. BOUCHER: That is so incredibly speculative I just can't deal with it. I don't know that that the ICC has done anything one way or the other about Saddam.