

# Iraq urged to free Americans



BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — The head of the U.S. interest section in Baghdad urged

Iraq to free two Americans convicted of illegally entering the country, and insisted on his right to visit them in prison in the meantime.

The men are "absolutely innocent," Polish diplomat Ryszard Krystosik asserted in an exclusive interview with Associated Press Television. Poland represents the United States in dealings with the Iraqi government.

Krystosik said his office "will spare no effort to have their release. We request their release to be immediate."

Iraq was silent Sunday on the eight-year prison sentences imposed on the two men, but Iraqi media carried a barrage of criticism of the United States.

One Iraqi newspaper blasted what it called American "cowboy" foreign policy, and the deputy prime minister rejected a U.S.-backed proposal to permit Iraq to sell more oil to generate revenues to feed its people.

U.S. officials fear that Iraq may view the Americans as bargaining chips in its campaign to end crippling U.N. economic sanctions.

The United States insists the issues are separate, and officials have said they are working hard

to gain the men's release.

"We've made very clear that there's no justification for the sentences that were imposed on these two: These were innocent mistakes that were involved here," White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said on NBC's *Meet the Press*.

David Daliberti, 41, of Jacksonville, Florida, and William Barloon, 39, of New Hampton, Iowa, were detained by Iraqi police on March 13 after crossing the border from Kuwait. Western officials say the men, employees of defense contractors in Kuwait, were trying to visit a friend in the U.N. force that monitors the frontier.

Barloon's wife, Linda, also called on Iraq to release the men.

Mrs. Barloon, 37, said their three children — Bill, 13; Brian, 11; and Becky, nine — "question why their father is being held as a criminal" when his detention was the result of a series of mistakes.

Before Saturday's court decision, Iraqi officials had linked the Americans' detention to the severe hardships facing Iraq's 18 million people because of the U.N. sanctions, which bar Baghdad from selling oil, its economic mainstay.

The United States and Britain have blocked efforts to lift the sanctions, insisting Iraq must

first comply fully with all U.N. Security Council resolutions, including dismantling its weapons programs.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Sunday rejected a new U.S.-backed proposal which would allow Iraq to sell \$4 billion worth of oil annually. Iraq would be permitted to spend half the money on food and medicine, but 30 percent would be earmarked for war reparations to Kuwait and 20 percent for U.N. humanitarian work with Iraqi Kurds.

"This new American project is nothing but a maneuver to deceive international opinion and prolong the embargo," Aziz said in a statement, the official Iraqi News Agency reported.

The Babil newspaper, published by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's eldest son Odaï, on Sunday blasted what it termed a U.S. foreign policy "based... on the insight of a cowboy looking out for his own narrow interests."

It repeated Iraq's contention that America wants to prevent Iraq from selling oil as long as possible so that U.S. allies such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait can market more of their own.

Iraq insists it has complied with resolutions laid down in the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire, and therefore the sanctions should be lifted.

# Police in Japan seek bomber's identity

TOKYO (AP) — Police returned Sunday to the main compound of a secretive doomsday cult, this time officially looking for evidence linking the group to a deadly nerve-gas attack on the crowded Tokyo subway.

Hundreds of police armed with a warrant specifying they were investigating murders searched laboratories and storage areas for nine hours, seizing papers and chemicals.

When police explored the main compound of the Aum Shinri Kyo, or "Supreme Truth," last Wednesday, they wore gas masks and other protective clothing, but said they were looking for evidence in unrelated kidnapping cases.

Sunday's raid was officially linked to the investigation of the March 20 attack on the morning rush-hour subway,

which killed 10 people and left 5,000 others with symptoms such as seizures and temporary blindness.

At the compound in snowy Kamikuishiki, police removed cardboard boxes and loaded drums of chemicals onto trucks.

Masahiro Terao, head of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police investigation bureau, said police seized several hundred containers of medicines, documents and books.

But a police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said some 1,000 officers had been looking for evidence that laboratory facilities and chemicals there did or could produce lethal sarin gas, which was used in the subway attacks. He said the search would continue Monday.

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