

U.S. reviews Iran's request

by UPI

BAGHDAD - U.S. officials are reviewing a request from Iran to visit five Iranians captured in a raid in Iraq in January, a spokesman said.

The U.S. military spokesman, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William Caldwell, said at a news conference Wednesday that Iran's request was "being assessed at this time," The New York Times reported.

Caldwell's statement came in response to a reporter's question concerning an Iranian state news agency report that said an Iranian diplomat would meet with the detainees. U.S. officials have accused the men of helping insurgents in Iraq.

Iran insists the five men in U.S. custody are diplomats. Iraq has said that the men, while not officially diplomats, were serving as liaisons between Iran and Iraq.

Iraq's foreign minister, Hoshyar Zebari, told the Times in a telephone interview the men would have had diplomatic immunity as soon as the process of formalizing their office into a consulate was complete.

"It was not a clandestine operation," he told the Times. "They were known by us."

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