

The State Department Presents

by Lindsay Goss and Nicholas Ridout

The time: recently.

The place: here.

Cast of Characters

Scott	Lindsay Goss
Dan	Nicholas Ridout
Steve	Lindsay Goss
Jim	Lindsay Goss
Jeff	Nicholas Ridout
HQ	Lindsay Goss
Daniel	Nicholas Ridout
Bradley	Lindsay Goss
Glyn	Lindsay Goss
Lambros	Nicholas Ridout / Lindsay Goss
Nick	Nicholas Ridout
Ben	Nicholas Ridout
Maya	Nicholas Ridout / Lindsay Goss
Larry	Lindsay Goss
Pilot	Nicholas Ridout
Mike	Lindsay Goss
Justin	Nicholas Ridout

Lighting	Justin Carroll
Board Operator	Tayla Bourege

With grateful thanks to Ric Royer, Andrew Starner, Peter Bussigel, Clare Ridout

MR. VENTRELL: I have one more for you before we – and you can ask about any of the toppers, but let me do my last thing, which is to point out to all of you, to highlight the decision by the European Court of Human Rights regarding the detention, trial, and conviction of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. The court decision found that Mrs. Tymoshenko's pre-trial detention was arbitrary and unlawful and a right to liberty restricted for reasons other than those permissible. We reiterate our call that Mrs. Tymoshenko be released and the practice of selective prosecution in Ukraine end.

So, Brad, having said that, I'll turn it over to all of you.

QUESTION: I had, actually, a follow-up on freedom of information.

MR. VENTRELL: Okay.

QUESTION: Do you have a comment on the Iraqi decision to revoke the license for Al Jazeera? I think they suspended several Iraqi TV networks as well. I think it was a couple days ago already.

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah. Thanks, Brad. So we are concerned by – that the Iraqi Government's Communications and Media Commission has suspended the license of 10 media outlets. This action undermines the democratic principles of the Iraqi constitution and the Iraqi Government's ability to guarantee freedom of the press and freedom of expression. We've expressed our concern to Iraqi authorities and call on them to reverse this decision. We've been told that this is a temporary measure and await action that could correct this order. And the protection of journalistic freedom is an essential aspect of all democratic societies, and we urge the Iraqi Government to respect press freedoms and safeguard journalists throughout Iraq.

QUESTION: So how are you urging them to do this? You've made a call and said, "Wow, this is really bad," or what? I mean, this is a pretty drastic measure compared to some of the things you've raised in the last couple days, even.

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah. Well, we're concerned, and that's why we've raised it at the Embassy. I'll have to check and see if we've also made calls from Washington. But we've absolutely raised it very clearly with senior levels of the Iraqi Government to make our concerns crystal-clear in this regard.

QUESTION: Can we stay in Iraq?

MR. VENTRELL: Okay. Go ahead.

Washington D.C., April 30. 2013.