

DIPLOMATIC CONVOYS

Two days ago Iraq said it was kicking Eric Prince and his mercenary thugs out of Iraq. Yesterday, Iraq said it would review all the mercenary thugs (and legitimate security entities) to see if they could stay in Iraq. And today, the US announces a curb on land-based civilian travel.

The United States on Tuesday suspended all land travel by U.S. diplomats and other civilian officials throughout Iraq, except in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone. The move follows a weekend incident involving private security guards protecting a diplomatic convoy in which a number of Iraqi civilians were killed.

In a notice sent to Americans in Iraq, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad said it had taken the step to review the security of its personnel and possible increased threats to those leaving the Green Zone while accompanied by such security details.

"In light of a serious security incident involving a U.S. embassy protective detail in the Mansour District of Baghdad, the embassy has suspended official U.S. government civilian ground movements outside the International Zone (IZ) and throughout Iraq," the notice said.

Question: Is this an reflection of rising violence against American personnel, as some have suggested? Or is it an attempt to forestall the conflict with the Iraqi government over whether Blackwater and others can continue to stay in Iraq? After all, if you were an Administration anxiously hoping to gain a victory on the Iraq debate in Congress, you might attempt to put off conflicts that involve

sovereignty, security, and imperialism.