

Under Secretary Burns Presents Human Rights Awards

Notice to the Press

Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

April 20, 2011

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns will present the Diplomacy for Human Rights Award, the Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award, and the Human Rights Defenders Award in the Department of State's Treaty Room, Thursday, April 21 at 11:30 a.m.

The Human Rights Defenders Award recognizes individuals or non-governmental organizations who show exceptional valor and leadership in advocating the protection of human rights and democracy in the face of government repression. The Department will honor the Cuban NGO Damas de Blanco - "Ladies in White". Damas de Blanco's visible, consistently observed vigils focused international attention not only on political prisoners, but the overall human rights situation in Cuba.

Ambassador Stephen Beecroft of U.S. Embassy Amman will receive the Diplomacy for Human Rights Award for his extraordinary commitment to defending human rights and advancing democratic principles in Jordan. His advocacy has created new opportunities to engage the government on a broad range of human rights issues, with progress on both individual cases and systematic reform.

The Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award will be presented to Christian Marchant of U.S. Embassy Hanoi for outstanding work to prevent torture and defend the rights of Vietnam's dissidents, and Holly Lindquist Thomas of U.S. Embassy Tashkent for superb reporting

underscoring issues of child labor during the cotton harvest and key contributions to diplomatic engagement in support of civil society and human rights activists in Uzbekistan.

This event will be open to credentialed members of the media.

Pre-set time for cameras: 10:45 a.m. from the 23rd Street entrance

Final access time for journalists and still photographers: 11:15 a.m. from 23rd Street entrance.

Media representatives may attend this event upon presentation of one of the following: (1) A U.S. Government-issued identification card (Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense or Foreign Press Center), (2) a media-issued photo identification card, or (3) a letter from their employer on letterhead verifying their employment as a journalist, accompanied by an official photo identification card (driver's license, passport.)

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