

time. We had two statements from soldiers that indicated that one of the press individuals wearing a press bulletproof vest had an AK-47 and fired at us, the other one had an RPG-7. We don't have any credible evidence in that regard, so we released them; however, we are continuing the investigation. We know through their bureau chiefs how to get in touch with them if we want to question them or even pick them up again.

Q: Sir, if I can ask one follow-up question.

Swannack: Right.

Q: From talking to our journalists who work wearing the press jackets, we believe one was carrying a tripod, one was carrying a camera. Is it possible that your soldiers may have mistaken these items for weapons and that's where the confusion arose?

Swannack: I don't want to speculate on what those soldiers saw. They have sworn statements on what they said they saw, and that's good enough for me. I back up our troopers 100 percent. However, I do go ahead and investigate incidents like this to find out what really happened. But down there on the front lines, our troopers make snap judgments, and more often -- I mean much, much, much more often than not, they're right.

Thank you very much. Come out and see us in Al Anbar. Have a great day.

Copyright © 2003 by Federal News Service Inc., Ste. 220, 1919 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 USA. Federal News Service is a private firm not affiliated with the federal government. No portion of this transcript may be copied, sold or retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News Service Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the original work prepared by a U.S. government officer or employee as a part of that person's official duties. For information on subscribing to the FNS Internet Service, please visit www.fednews.com or call (202) 347-1400.