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## **U.N., U.S. can't agree on Guantanamo visit**

Associated Press

April 5, 2005

GENEVA - Officials from the United Nations and the United States have not been able to agree on conditions for a possible fact-finding mission to the detention center at Cuba's Guantanamo Bay, the U.N. special investigator on torture said Tuesday.

Manfred Nowak met Monday afternoon with Pierre Prosper, the American ambassador-at-large for war crimes, and said U.S. officials refused to guarantee him the right to speak to detainees in private - an "absolute precondition" for such a visit.

Nowak, an Austrian lawyer, also said his team would need full access to the facilities and the prison population, conditions that Washington was hesitant to agree to.

"I would have hoped that yesterday we would have received a formal invitation - that was not the case," he said. "Either we get an invitation (to Guantanamo) this year or not at all."

On Monday, Nowak said before the 53-nation Human Rights Commission that he was hopeful of arranging visits this year to U.S. detention centers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo Bay.

But a day after his meeting with Prosper, Nowak ruled out visits to other detention centers and said Guantanamo was the only possibility for 2005.

"I raised also Iraq and Afghanistan (with U.S. officials) and the response was: 'Let's first concentrate on Guantanamo and then let's see further,'" he explained.

Unlike some countries, the United States offers U.N. special investigators no standing invitation to visit the country or any places under its jurisdiction. For a fact-finding mission to take place, permission must be granted by Washington after terms are negotiated.