

Sega Daily, July 2, 2009

“The U.S. Calls on Bulgaria to Stop Vote Buying”

Bulgaria received yesterday a warning that vote buying is of serious concern to its most powerful ally—the United States. “We are very concerned about the reports of vote buying and by other irregularities during the European Parliament elections. We strongly hope that this won’t happen in the general elections,” stated American Ambassador Nancy McEldowney.

At a meeting with Sofia journalists, Amb. McEldowney, who will take a high ranking position in Washington in the fall, warned the parties that the vote-buying seriously undermines their legitimacy and the legitimacy of the government to be formed after the elections.

“Vote buying is harmful in many ways. It’s bad for the people who sell their votes, because they give up that vote, it’s bad for the parties that buy the votes, because it undermines their legitimacy.”

“Anyone who cares about Bulgaria is looking forward to seeing results in the fight against corruption and organized crime,” said Amb. McEldowney. Starting in September, she will be responsible for the U.S. policy on all European countries. According to her, there are people in the Bulgarian government who work hard to deal with corruption and organized crime.

“But I realize very well that we are being judged not by how hard we work, but by the results we produce. We see efforts, but we don’t see sufficient progress,” she noted.

In her opinion, the new government must work out a clear strategy as to what and when it wants to accomplish and this strategy should be made public through the media. This is a way for the public to hold the government accountable on results. “Everyone makes promises. But it’s the society’s job and the media’s job to hold the elected officials accountable.”

She underscored that the American government does not interfere in elections “We don’t support a certain party or a certain candidate. This is none of our business.”