



From the Office of Secretary of State

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Secretary Gale responds to concerns following radio broadcast

Responding to the calls of many concerned citizens, Secretary of State John Gale today clarified the role of international election observers during the upcoming General Election.

Questions arose following a live radio broadcast that insinuated armed election observers from the United Nations would be coming to polling places on November 6, including those in Omaha to "monitor, insure compliance, check identification and frisk voters if necessary."

This is completely false, said Secretary Gale. "I want to make it clear that the U.N. has no right to send election observers to the United States, much less any whom are 'armed and in uniform.' It is also untrue that Omaha was targeted due to serious concerns about civil rights violations."

"While it may have been an attempt at humor, the claim made in this broadcast was in poor taste and reckless. It has fostered citizen outrage and concern about armed observers at their polling sites."

As a member of the 56-nation Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United States has an agreement with other countries which allows for the observation of one another's elections.

Election observers have been coming to the U.S. regularly since the founding of that group in 1975 to observe presidential elections. "The U.S. has sent election observers for national elections in a number of member countries as well," said Gale, "several of whom have been election officials from Nebraska."

While teams of observers from the OSCE will be in the U.S. to observe the upcoming election, Nebraska is not among the states that will be visited.

In response to this broadcast, Secretary of Gale added, "This is a serious time in America, right before a presidential election. Spoofing the process demeans our democracy. People don't need further

distractions as they prepare to cast their votes. They need straightforward and honest information on which they can rely."

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