



## Interview With Rothchild Frangois of Radio Metropole and Voice of America

**Secretary Colin L. Powell**

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

December 1, 2004

(3:00 a.m. EST)

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Secretary Powell it is a great honor to have this interview with you. It might be the last one – as Secretary of State. So Mr. Powell, you just came here to support the government and to see the situation, and the first question will be on security. Security is a great concern of the Haitian people, how to you see the situation regarding the security issue?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Security is a major concern. It has to be the first priority of the government, the first priority of the UN forces that are here, and the civilian police trainers that are here as well, and for the Haitian national police. If people don't feel safe in their homes, if they don't feel safe on the streets, or they don't feel it is safe to send their children to school, then they won't have confidence in the government and in the future. So in my conversations with the [interim] government leaders--the president and the prime minister--and with the UN leaders here, I emphasized the need for the UN force to become more forceful in providing presence on the streets, in going after those who are responsible for the violence. I talked about the need for disarmament. These groups have to be disarmed. We really have to have a situation where only the government has the weapons, not individual militias or individual criminals. So I hope that as the UN force is now built up in size--and it will get even larger over the next month--they will take a more active role in imposing proper security conditions throughout the country.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** What do you think of the Baghdad Operation launched by Aristide supporters calling for his return to Haiti? This morning you were at the National Palace and could hear the some shots.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I could hear some shots. I've heard shots before in my life. They seemed not nearby, so they weren't terribly concerning to me. I don't think there is a place now for Mr. Aristide. I think Haiti has moved on. I think the proper way forward is with this interim government that has no political ambition. All it wants to do is to create conditions for a full, free, fair election next year. What the Haitian people need is to see their leaders and people with different points of view participate in a national dialogue, national reconciliation. And not just fight over these different points of view, but to sit down and resolve them. And then take the issue to the people in the form of an election – a free election, an open election, a fair election. And that is the only way to move forward. Ex-president Aristide is no longer on the scene. I hope that those who supported him in the past will now realize it is time to support national reconciliation. The needs of the Haitian people are greater than any one individual or the needs of any one individual.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Do you have a message for people who still believe Aristide could still return to power in Haiti?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't think, you know it is not practical right now to think in these terms. He is not here. And the government is moving on. The international community is assembled with military presence, with police presence, and with a great deal of money to help the Haitian people bring in place a new freely elected government that will give them hope, give them a belief in the future, but more than that, create jobs for them, create security conditions for them. So this is not the time to think about what might have been or who was here before, but to think about the future. I think that the future is something we pray that our children will enjoy. I think all the time about the children of Haiti and the kind of world they should be enjoying as they grow up. It is a world that will be built by this interim government and the government that is elected next year. And I hope that all individuals in Haiti, all leaders in Haiti, all parties in Haiti will focus on the future and not fight the battles of the past.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Mr. Powell, the security concerns (inaudible) the organization of the election next year. If the situation deteriorates, might the U.S. involve its military?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No, there are no plans for the United States to send military forces back in. There will be some 6,000 UN troops here, in addition to the Haitian national police, which we are going to work with the international community to build them up as soon as possible. They are going to be responsible for security. I have just been briefed by the military commanders and by Commander Beer who is running the police part of it. They believe it is within their capacity to put in place security conditions that will permit an election next year.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** If Haiti could expect nothing from the U.S. to stop the Baghdad Operation of Aristide supporters?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The United States is doing everything it can for Haiti. We are providing a great deal of funding, we provided \$46 million dollars for relief efforts in the areas that were flooded up North, we're providing another \$180 million dollars in other direct assistance. We will provide more next year. We are providing our support in the UN and with the international community and we are supporting the UN forces that are here. So I think we are providing a great deal of support. But we are not going to support those who continue to use violence, we are not going to support those who are not committed to a democratic way of moving forward, who are not committed to democracy, and we are not going to support those who are trying to recover the past. The past was not pleasant. We have to remember where we were last February. We were on the verge of a very violent civil war – and that was avoided. Now it is time to build and not go back to the past and recreate the conditions that caused the problem in the first place.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Mr. Powell, economic development is very important. Without security we can't have economic development in Haiti.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** They go hand in hand--security, economic development, and political reconciliation. You have to have all three. They don't have to be in sequence, you can work on all three at the same time. But ultimately you must have security for the other two to pay off. You cannot have a democratic system that is surrounded by the chaos of violence in the streets. Now there is a security problem here in Haiti, it is a serious one. But in my conversations, as I said, with the UN people who are here and with your own government, there are plans being formulated and troop presences increasing to deal with this security problem.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** And regarding the economic issue, like aid. Last July, we had an important meeting in Washington, and the government is still waiting for the money. Will the U.S. government help Haiti get this money needed for the Haitian people?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The U.S. has committed \$100 million dollars so far, of the money we pledged. So the U.S. money is flowing. It has helped with your infrastructure, provision of electricity, and other services. There will be a meeting of the contributors from the July session you made reference to that will take place in the middle of December and I hope that will release additional funds to come to Haiti. As I said to the Prime Minister earlier, the government has to be ready to receive these funds and use them in an efficient and effective way. The people who give money to Haiti want to make sure the money will be used properly and that they are satisfied that the money will be going to the right priorities and to the right programs. Yes, we will be encouraging, the United States will be encouraging these international commitment makers to now start delivering the funds.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Secretary Powell, you had a meeting with youth, talking about HIV/AIDS. Today is World AIDS Day. Do you have a message for the Haitian people and

also the youth?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Today is World AIDS Day and the United States has been working hard throughout the world to combat this terrible disease. President Bush has been in the forefront of this effort and has committed us to \$15 billion dollars of funding for HIV/AIDS programs in the areas of education, anti-retroviral drugs, condoms, creating programs that focus on abstinence, but also on being faithful, proper use of condoms, and above all, don't stigmatize those who have been hit by this disease. This is a disease and it can be treated. People should be respected, even if they do have HIV/AIDS, in fact, because of it they should be respected -- because they are fellow human beings. So on this World AIDS Day, I just want to let the people of Haiti know that the United States is committed and we will do everything we can to help Haiti deal with the problem of HIV/AIDS. We provided \$20 million dollars in funding this year and will be providing \$40 million dollars next year.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Secretary Powell you are (inaudible). You will leave office next year. What can Haiti expect from you after leaving office?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I will always be interested in what happens in Haiti. When I was here 10 years ago, with President Carter, to talk the Generals to step aside, I was a private citizen then, I was no longer in public office. Even though I'm leaving public office again as Secretary of State, the Haitian people should know that I have been following developments in this country for many years. Even as a private citizen I will follow developments, but even more than that, I will speak out and do everything I can to help the people of Haiti gain what they so richly deserve -- a democratic country that has resolved its political differences in a democratic way through an election that the international community is helping so that every Haitian can have a better life, every Haitian child has a better future.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** So Haiti can count on you?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Do you have a last message for the Haitian people?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Keep the faith. People are here to help you. You must do your part -- you must reject violence, you must push back on those who would try to intimidate you, you must support the forces of democracy and freedom, you must not go back to the past, you must look to the future. As you look to the future, you will have a good friend standing alongside you in the United States of America.

**MR. FRANÇOIS:** Mr. Secretary, it was a great honor to have this meeting with you.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you very much Mr. François.

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