



## Press Conference With Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue

**Secretary Colin L. Powell**

Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
December 1, 2004

(12:45 p.m. EST)

**INTERIM PRIME MINISTER LARTORTUE:** I am very happy to present today the Secretary of State of the United States on a working visit (inaudible). At the same time, I am very happy to receive him. I am proud to see that maybe I'm at the last press conference with him before his resignation. I would like to publicly address to him our sentiments of gratitude on behalf of the Haitian government, in the name of the Haitian people, for his policy in favor of Haiti and this for many, many years. And as he is now leaving his position as Secretary of State, I am sure that he will continue to be interested in Haiti because the first time that he came here during the crisis with the military government, he was not a secretary of state, and even then he was very interested in Haiti. So, Mr. Secretary of State, please accept from us all of the gratitude of the Haitian government for what you did in the interest of small countries like Haiti and we thank you for this. I will let the Secretary explain what we discussed. And if there is a reason for me to (inaudible), I will answer your questions. Mr. Secretary of State.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you very much Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for your very kind words. I again come to Haiti to demonstrate that the United States is ready support the democracy, prosperity and, most of all, hope in Haiti. I had very productive discussions this morning with President Alexandre, Prime Minister Latortue, members of civic society. In all our conversations this morning, the focus was on the needs of the Haitian people. To begin with, I once again express condolences to the people of Haiti from the people of the United States for the loss of life that occurred during the recent (inaudible) storm. I have assured the President and Prime Minister of continuing United States Government support in the rebuilding and reconstruction effort here in Haiti.

I am pleased with the efforts of the international community and the United Nations in assisting Haiti in such a troubled time. The United States made 46 million dollars available for disaster relief in addition to the 180 million dollars we pledged earlier for Haitian development. We understand that for democracy to succeed in Haiti, we also need to improve the economic opportunities for Haitians. We also understand that the people of Haiti are looking for security and opportunity. The United States and the international community will work closely with (inaudible) to restore the rule of law. The UN stabilization mission ably led by South American soldiers demonstrate that the international community's strong commitment for restoration of order and democracy in Haiti. The political violence and corruption cannot be tolerated. To build a strong vibrant democracy and to advance the rule of law, we have got to get the other weapons off the street. Without security, Haiti's democracy will remain at risk. The work of the United Nations and the Organization of the American States will pave the way for free and fair elections in the coming year. Haitian authorities will prepare those elections and Haitian people will freely choose their leader. The political process must be open to all for participation in a peaceful way including the Lavalas party. But there must be no role in government for those engage in political violence. We firmly support the idea of a broad national dialogue that we understand the United Nations intends to convoke in January. And I know that the President and the Prime Minister are anxious to participate in this dialogue. In my meetings today, all Haitian leaders that I've met with heartily agree to participate in an inclusive, national dialogue and we urge all peace loving Haitians to participate in this national effort. Rest assured that the United States will continue to work with our global partners for peace, stability, and democracy. We understand very clearly what Haiti needs, first and foremost security -- people can be secure in their homes, secure going to work, feel safe in sending their children to school. We know that the UN force is growing rapidly in strength in capability, working with the Haitian people, to do everything they can to provide this security for the Haitian people. Then we need economic development. I will go back to Washington to encourage the international community to release the funds that they have previously committed to Haiti. And the prime minister and I discussed what his government has to do to make sure that the government is ready to use these funds in the most effective manner. The national dialogue I touched on earlier is ... whatever their differences, whatever their past history, they can come together now and present their points of view in a national dialogue by way of preparing the Haitian people to make their choice next November as to how they wish to be governed. Democracy does not exist in the presence of people who are unwilling to compromise and in the presence of violence. Finally in all of my discussions today I heard ... of justice, the need for the rule of law to prevail -- not the rule of the street, not the rule of the gun -- with human rights to be obeyed and to be recognized with universal rights for all people. Mr. Prime Minister I say to you once again that the United States remains committed to your efforts, remains committed to your government, we will do everything we can to ... path ahead. Much progress has been made under your leadership and there is much more to be done and we will be with you all the way. Thank you.

**QUESTION:** In your recent visit to Haiti you said and I quote "Haiti does not need an army now, it specially needs a professional police force." Today with insecurity rising, two hours ago we heard these weapons shooting right next to the palace. How do you understand the situation, what should be done to end this climate of insecurity?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I think we need the rapid build-up of the national police force. And we had conversations about that today with respect to providing the national police more training and more equipment to make them more capable. We have worked hard in recent weeks to help the UN build up its forces here to about 4800 troops and it will go to about 6000 troops by the end of this month. I think between the efforts of UN troops and the capability of the national police this is the solution to security. They have to forcefully take on the armed individuals behind the firing this morning. And they have to remove weapons from the hands of all parties who are not part of the government. The police should have weapons, but not individuals and various militias. I think you will see in the weeks ahead that the UN force will be acting with greater cooperation and greater capability. And when I go back to Washington I will begin to work to get additional resources directed to the national police for its build up. The question of an army is something as I have said previously, is for Haitians to decide by an elected government. So this is a time to focus not on something that doesn't exist, an army, but on the police force.

**QUESTION:** This question is actually both for Mr. Powell and Prime Minister Latortue -- there are increasing talks in academic and analyst circles to create a long-term protectorate for Haiti, what are your thoughts about this?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Our view right now is that we have a game plan that is authorized by the United Nations; there is a United Nations representative here, Mr. Valdes, with a rapidly growing force; we have a constitutionally designated government that is hard at work; and we have a plan in place that would lead to elections in November. And that is the plan we should follow. The idea of that kind of protectorate or something of that nature I don't know what that would do to end the violence or to bring a greater degree of security; the plan we have put forward was just accepted by the international community; the international community has donated money for the plan, and it operates under the authority of UN resolution; that's the way we should go and should continue to go.

**INTERIM PRIME MINISTER LATORTUE:** I have no time to waste to comment on an article that Don Bohning wrote about Haiti he expressed his own opinion that Haiti needs a protectorate. It is obvious that he doesn't understand history at all -- if in the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our independence, that is all he can find to say. I have known him for a long time, he has been writing for over 30 years, if that is all he can put out, he is completely wrong. Haiti needs to reorganize itself, a real government, a government that is working to fix the police, fight against corruption, fight for democracy, for Human Rights and Haiti will take back the place it used to have in History.

**QUESTION:** There are many people who think that MINUSTAH is not able to face the groups that are terrorizing the country there are many people that hope that the American troops will come back to Haiti to put an end to the insecurity. For now is there a policy that is in place at the level of the government that is being considered by President Bush to bring American troops back to Haiti?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No. At the moment we have confidence in the MINUSTAH forces here. It is taking it longer than I would have liked to build up its strength but

that strength is building up rapidly now, with confident commanders and competent people and more forces arriving. The United States completely supports that effort and we have confidence in their troops. So there are no plans for US troops to return to Haiti.

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