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Interview by Cincinnati Enquirer Editorial Board

Secretary Colin L. Powell

Cincinnati, Ohio
August 16, 2004

(4:00 p.m. EDT)



SECRETARY POWELL: Well, thank you for giving me this opportunity, and in the interest of time, I'll just go right to questions and I'll make my prepared statement as we go through your questions and I give my answers. (Laughter.)

A PARTICIPANT: Well, thank you very much.

MR. WELLS: Actually, we're very interested in what the President had to say this morning and like to hear your comments on that. As you may have heard already, Wesley Clark responded to the news of the redeployment for Europe and Asia and said it would significantly undermine U.S. national security and that it was an ill-conceived move and its timing was politically motivated rather than designed to strengthen our national security. I wonder if you could address that.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, we've been studying it for years. When Don Rumsfeld came in as Secretary, he started to look at our force deployments around the world to see if they were rationalized and made sense in a very distinctly different environment than the environment of the past 50 years. And then after 9/11, it became even more apparent that we should take another look at the nature of the enemy we were facing. And also noted that we had a much better relationship with Russia than that existed when all of these facilities were put in place.

And so he started to study it, and we have been discussing our plans with our allies for at least a year and a half, and -- a State Department and Defense Department team, both my Under Secretary and one of Don's under secretaries or assistant secretaries, have been going around to every country involved, to Europe and Asia, explaining it to them, telling them what we have in mind. I think as you all know -- because this one was public, we told the Koreans some time ago what our plans were, and they are not surprised at any of the announcements the President made today.

And there's been reporting on these proposals for well over a year, and it was time for them to be announced in a formal way. And no specific item was announced today. The President said that over the next period of years, and I think it would take six to seven years to do all of this, some roughly 70,000 troops would be redeployed back in the United States to try to stabilize their family situations and their home basing situations. This will also be done in coordination with the Base Realignment study that's taking place; in other words, rationalize our base structure.

I'm something of an expert in this, since, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 12 years ago, 13, 14 years ago, working for then-Secretary of Defense Cheney, we brought home from Europe 200,000, and we reduced over a period of three years 500,000 troops from our force structure, plus 250,000 civilians and 250,000 reservists during that immediate post-Cold War period.

But as I have said to many audiences, the base structure that was left in place is a combination of where the forces ended up at the end of World War II, some Cold War redeployments -- World War II's over, Cold War's over, time to rationalize the force structure -- and that's what this is all about, and it's not politically motivated. It was time to make the announcement so that we can now send a State Department and Defense Department team out to the individual countries and start negotiating down to line-item detail which facilities would be moved out of, and what new places we might be moving to.

MR. LANG: One of the comments that the President made was that this would help strengthen our alliances. And as we've been well aware of lately, some of those alliances are frayed. How will this help strengthen those? How do we mend some of the frayed alliances, and particularly in regard to Iraq? What do we want from them? What do we need at this point?

SECRETARY POWELL: What we've gotten from our allies in Europe, for example, is that 16 of the 26 nations of NATO are involved in Iraq, making a contribution in Iraq, and a larger number are making a contribution in Afghanistan, to include, with respect to Afghanistan, the French and the Germans.

The big disagreement we had with some of our allies last year was over Iraq, and principally with the French and the Germans. In the aftermath of the conflict, we have been able to get the French and the Germans to support us on every resolution we've put forward to the UN on the reconstruction effort. But they do not intend to put troops into Iraq, or -- either from Germany or France. If anyone suggests that they're going to get them to do that, I think that's not going to happen.

But they can help us in other ways. They helped us recently when NATO came together and authorized a training mission to go to Iraq, and that mission has gone. It will be going back in greater strength to see how NATO, as an alliance -- as an alliance, can help Iraqis train police and military.

Now, I don't think we cement our alliance by the number of troops that are there. When we faced this in the early part of the last decade, we simply went to the Germans, said, "The Cold War's over. The Russians are not coming through the Fulda Gap. We don't need 330,000 troops in Europe." Brought it down to something like 100, to 140,000, on my watch, and now, ten years later, it was time to take another look.

They understand what we're doing, and, in fact, what Don Rumsfeld has done is say, "Look, I'm taking these heavy divisions out of Germany but I'm going to replace them with this striker brigade, with this new vehicle, new concept, part of our transforming army." So, in effect, he is transforming the Army to make it more useful and really almost as a test bed for our NATO allies to also begin their own transforming efforts.

The British are cutting the size of their forces in Britain. Both the French and the Germans are making reductions in their base structure. So it shouldn't be that shocking that we would make our reductions in base structure.

In Korea, they have known for some time we'd be taking some troops out. Took some out recently to go to Iraq, but-- and more will eventually come out--but a huge investment is being made in Korea to modernize the forces that remain and make sure that they are at the very top of the technological ladder. And I think the Koreans realize that we may well be strengthening the alliance rather than weakening the alliance. And by moving the troops away from the DMZ, you gain strategic depth and makes it less likely that those troops will be overwhelmed in the first stages of a war.

So I think, in every one of these cases, we've thought through the concerns of our allies, we've talked to them. I don't want to speak for all the allies; I'll let them speak for themselves in due course. But they understand what we're doing, and I think they recognize that change is appropriate. They're all making changes in their force structure to deal with a new environment and to organize against the real threat that's out there, and that's terrorism.

MR. LANG: And in regard to Iraq, what do we want from them?

SECRETARY POWELL: What I want -- I always welcome contributions of troops. I'm not expecting any of our allies or partners in the world, who may not be allies but are partners and work with us, to come up with large numbers of troops. And we would be happy if they could come up with additional troops to protect the UN people that are going back in. The real concentration of effort has to be to build up Iraqi forces as fast as possible.

So even though contributions of other nations would be welcome to join the 31 nations that are in Iraq now, and we are in discussions with a number of nations around the world to see if more can be acquired in the way of troop contributions, I'm not expecting a lot more, because we've got a pretty good force there with the 31 nations. What we really need to do is take whatever monies we have, and we have quite a bit of money, and build up Iraqi forces.

The new Iraqi government -- it's quite fascinating to watch how this government is taking over. But their principle interest right now is, "Yes, we're pleased that the foreign troops are here, that the Americans are there. We couldn't do this without you right now. But we want to build up our capability as fast as possible so that you can go home, everybody can go home, and we can protect ourselves. Therefore, you might want to bring in some additional troops, but we're more interested in building up our own troop capacity and not getting more foreign troops into Iraq."

But yesterday, when they had their conference, with mortar rounds falling all over the place, nevertheless, 1,100 Iraqis came to this convention center to speak out. About, oh, I think, something like 30 or more percent of them were women. And they were jumping up and down and arguing with each other, and I read all the newspaper headlines this morning. I said, "Oh, my God, what happened?" And I called John Negroponte, our Ambassador, on my hotline when I got to work, and he said, "I'll tell you what's happening. There's democracy in that convention hall. It looks like, I won't name any state, but it looks like a state caucus." (Laughter.) I'm not offending anybody here today, I'll tell you that.

And so they are anxious to build up their capacity, defeat this insurgency, show that they are leading their country and not the Americans, and see the foreign forces leave, which is the same thing we want to see, foreign forces leave. But we can't leave before the job is done. The President has made that clear, and I think he made it clear in his speech earlier this morning.

MR. WELLS: Sensitivity has become a very charged word in the current debate, and -- on how the United States has been conducting itself in Iraq. Are we sensitive enough to the diplomatic and cultural issues in the countries, like Iraq, where we're asserting ourselves?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes, I think -- if you'll forgive me, that word has become such a politically charged word that I will find a synonym for it since I'm the Secretary of State and I'm not supposed to indulge in partisan parochial politics. But we are very mindful of the views of others. I spend most of my life these days listening to others. In the last two to three weeks, I've been to seven or eight countries, and I listen, and I present our policy positions, and we take into account the needs of our friends and allies.

I was in Poland and Hungary just two weeks ago listening carefully to the political difficulty they have with their deployment of troops, but they're staying with it; they're not going to leave until the job is done, even though they have both lost troops in Iraq. And what's fascinating is these two countries that came out from behind the Iron Curtain know what freedom is, and they know that sometimes freedom requires sacrifice. And if you believe in freedom, and you wanted people to fight for your freedom, don't you have some obligation to help others fight for their freedom?

And so we listen to that, and we are very mindful of their views and we take them into account. This suggestion that somehow we are not listening to our friends and allies is not correct. Don Rumsfeld -- I saw him this morning at our NSC meeting -- he had just returned from his trip abroad, where he went to Azerbaijan, to Russia, to the Ukraine, to Afghanistan, and to other places as well, listening and responding and taking into account what people say to us.

But listening to our allies and participating in multilateral dialogue, it is not always -- is not a substitute for taking action when action is needed. And you take into account what people have said, but ultimately, as the President has said, he is responsible to the American people, for the safety of the American people, for the safety of our friends and allies and the alliances of which we are a part.

Sometimes you can gain full consensus, sometimes you have to go with a willing coalition.

MR. WELLS: Looking back on what's been happening in Iraq over the past year, were we -- do you think we were mindful enough, going in, to the cultural differences, the feelings of nationalism, the religious and ethnic differences within that country, and what might happen after Saddam was toppled?

SECRETARY POWELL: We were very mindful of the ethnic, cultural and religious differences within the country. We spent a lot of time discussing this and I had a lot of conversations with the President about it. And we knew that, after this conflict, which everybody was reasonably sure would bring down Saddam Hussein -- that was almost, you know, a given -- that we would have a real challenge in securing the nation and rebuilding.

Where we misjudged things, in my judgment, is that we didn't sense how stubborn and aggressive the former

regime elements could be and the staying power they would have. And as we went through the past year, they regained their strength. They were able to put together this insurgency that we are now facing. Could we have done things different? Might other actions have been taken last year to deal with this? I don't know. I can't answer that question. But it is a serious insurgency. It has to be defeated. I'm confident it will be defeated. And we have no choice, frankly, but to defeat it.

We have 25 million people who want to be free, who want to elect their own leaders, and we can't let that desire and that hope that we brought to them be denied them because there is a cleric in Najaf, who really doesn't enjoy the support of a large enough portion, any portion, really, significant portion of the Shia community, but has control of that mosque and has a small militia around him, nor can we deny the hope of these 25 million people because there are still these determined, stubborn, regime -- former regime elements that are in the Sunni Triangle that have to be dealt with and defeated.

MR. MCCAULEY: Mr. Secretary, the United States has given about \$300 million to help the people of Darfur. Is Khartoum doing what they need to be doing with it?

SECRETARY POWELL: Not yet. Not yet. I was in Khartoum, as you know, in early July. Kofi Annan and I were there just about the same time, and we both said the same thing to the leaders in Khartoum. One, you've got to open up access to the humanitarian workers. You've got to stop making it hard to get travel permits, visas, and keeping trucks and other stuff caught up in customs and delaying the arrival of humanitarian workers and the flow of humanitarian supplies.

The second thing you have to do is deal with the security situation in the Darfur region. You've got to bring the Jingawit under control, defeat them, bring them under control, however you do it, it's got to be done. Things don't happen by turning on a light switch in that part of the world. And so, we've watched carefully over the last six weeks now, I guess it is, seven weeks, and several things have happened.

One, we were able to put more strength behind those statements by getting a resolution out of the United Nations that gives the Khartoum Government 30 days from the time the resolution was passed to show progress or be at risk of other measures being applied, to include sanctions.

What we have seen in the way of Khartoum's response is there has been an improvement in this and there have been much, much fewer impediments to NGOs coming in and the work getting done. In fact, the challenge on that side that we have right now is getting more humanitarian workers in. They're not being held out. It's getting more capacity into Darfur to help these desperate people in need.

The other part of it, the security part of it, we've seen some steps, some efforts to put in more police and to use their military more effectively, but not enough. The situation in the countryside is still very difficult. We've seen some improvement in the last few days with the arrival of protection forces from the African Union to help the monitors who are there. You might have seen in your television sets this morning the Rwandan contingent arriving.

So we're starting to see some movement, but it's not as fast as I would like to see it, but there is some movement and -- but Khartoum certainly has to do a lot more. It's a very difficult thing to calibrate and I have to deal with this every day. How much pressure can you apply without the pressure starting to become counterproductive because the regime in Khartoum says, "Okay. We're not going to do anymore. Darfur is all yours. No, you do it," or do you just keep

applying pressure to make them respond?

They are responding; not as well as we would like and not as strongly as we need them to respond on the security side, but they have responded on the humanitarian side and we'll continue to apply that pressure and calibrate the pressure.

A great deal of discussion about calling it a genocide. Congress passed a resolution to call it a genocide. Genocide has to meet a certain legal standard under the treaty, and I have people who are in Darfur interviewing the victims and will bring me back data upon which to make such a determination.

But there should be no illusions about making a determination of genocide activities. It doesn't open any new avenues to you that we are not already using. There is no obligation under international law for us to do more than we are doing now. And if there is more that we want to do now, we don't need a declaration of genocide to do that. So we, once again, are calibrating: Will further declaration if the evidence supports it, of genocide, help us with the problem that we are facing?

And so, the one good thing, I would say, is the international community is united. We're working closely with the UN and with the African Union and with the European Union, but a lot more has to be done on the security side.

Some people have said, "Well, why doesn't somebody send in some troops?" This place is the size of -- it's about 80 percent the size of Texas, around somewhere approaching the size of France, very rough country, no roads to speak of, rainy season.

It would not be a simple military matter, and frankly, the way to solve it is using the government's forces, not bringing in an outside force that the government might well feel is violating its sovereignty, and then you have a new conflict on your hands.

MR. MCCAULEY: And so, the 30-day -- 30 days from the resolution is pretty close?

SECRETARY POWELL: Thirty-day is -- yeah, it's getting -- it's about another 10, 12, 15 days. I forget the exact day, but it's toward the end of August, and the Security Council will have to make an assessment at that time, and to make a judgment as to whether we have seen enough progress to take another 30 days, or whether we have not seen enough progress, and therefore, the Security Council should take more action.

Keep in mind that not all members of the Security Council see it this way. The vote was 13-0 with two abstentions. And so, we had to do quite a bit of work just to get the vote that high. And you would think everybody would see it that way, but some countries have other interests.

MR. WELLS: If it is a genocide, isn't the Government of Khartoum's attitude part of the problem? How do you get them to reasonably -- if genocide is their policy, it doesn't seem like something they'd be willing to --

SECRETARY POWELL: They will never agree that it's their policy. What they will say to you, and I was there and I met with the President and the Vice President, the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Interior, and they will say, "We know everybody is outraged about what's happened in Darfur, but don't forget how we got here. We were attacked in the beginning of 2003 by rebel forces."

That's true. Yeah, it's a matter of fact. Their response to it was not good, using their military, but more significantly, empowering these Jingaweit militia and actually giving them air support from government gunships. And so, it is that response that flushed all of these poor people out of their villages because they were destroying the villages as part of their response to the rebel movement.

And so, they would say that, you know, you ought to think, in the first instance, who the offended party are, and it's the government. And we're saying, "No, that's not going to make it, your response was totally inappropriate and you've got to look at what your response has now caused." But for the United States calling it genocide, the European Union does not see it as genocide. Kofi Annan, at this point, does not see it in those terms, as a legal matter.

So for us to call it genocide does not impose -- imposes a stigma from the United States on that government. But will that stigma cause the government to pull back or will it cause the government take a more positive action of the kind we're looking for? And that's what we're constantly calibrating.

My judgment, though, will be based on the facts, not the politics of calibration, as much as the facts given to me by my experts.

MR. LANG: As to our troubles with our allies --

SECRETARY POWELL: Some of our allies.

MR. LANG: Some of our allies.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, it's important to make that distinction because the question always comes, we, you know, the alliance is split wide open. Well, it's not the case. In Iraq, we had a unanimous resolution, the first one, 1441, after the President went to the UN. We had a major disagreement as to whether we should go to war, principally with the French, Germans, and the Russians, and some of the lesser countries. But all of Eastern Europe -- Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, and a number of other countries, were solidly aligned with us, so some of our allies, I think is a better way to put it.

MR. LANG: Right, agreed. I wanted to ask where we go with Iran. Do we take a different approach to them, particularly in regard to the nuclear threat, and also with North Korea?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah.

MR. LANG: Does that imply a different approach in this case?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah. Let me back into your question by answering it this way, saying that in the case of both North Korea and Iran, we have, once again, gone to the international community. In the case of Iran, we have been saying from the beginning of this Administration that we were persuaded that Iran was moving toward a nuclear weapons program. The Russians sort of didn't agree right away and they continued their work with Iran on the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

The IAEA was not sure. The European Union was not ready to get involved. But over the last year, the evidence has become irrefutable and the IAEA has now taken a tougher line with respect to Iran, and the European Union designated three of their foreign ministers of Germany, France and United Kingdom to approach the Iranians, which they did last fall.

Got a commitment from the Iranians, which the Iranians did not meet. They failed to meet the commitment they gave to the EU-3. And so the United States is working with the EU-3, with the IAEA, and next month we will take the problem back to the International Atomic Energy Agency, and it's a 35-member body, and see what the 35 members of the IAEA wish to do about this.

They can pass a resolution condemning it. They can refer it to the Security Council. We'll wait and see what they want to do. And then there will be another IAEA meeting in November, where it can be looked at again. So this is a case of the United States using the international community. There are no forces being mobilized to go into Iran.

With respect to North Korea, the more troublesome country to deal with -- trust me on this one -- it is one of the toughest, toughest nuts in the negotiating game. And I don't mean that they're nuts. They're quite rational in their own world and the way they look at things, but in terms of a problem to crack open, a nut to crack open. And what did we do in this case? Our Army is on the march? No. Everybody said, "Just go talk to the North Koreans. That's all you have to do. Just go have a little talk with them and everything will be fine."

And, well, 10 years ago, we thought that was the case and we entered into an Agreed Framework, a bilateral agreement. And the result of that was we were able to cap a program for a period of time without removing that program, the plutonium program at Yongbyon, and only to discover in the beginning of this Administration, there really was positive evidence in 2002 that while everybody was watching Yongbyon, the North Koreans were out developing an enriched uranium capability. So they had not abandoned going for a nuclear weapon.

What President Bush said is, "I'm not going to buy this football again, and we need a complete elimination of any program they have, whether it's uranium or plutonium." And the way we went about it and are going about it now is to involve all of the other neighbors of North Korea, who have a greater equity in this than we do. They're the ones who are at greatest threat, the Japanese and the South Koreans, and then the Russians and the Chinese, as friends of North Korea, if I can put it that way, not as great a friend as they've been in the past, but nevertheless, with an interest.

So we entered into a six-party agreement and it's slow, tedious work. You never know what statement is going to come out of Pyongyang tomorrow, but we have to respond to a lot of bluster, a lot of actions that are serious and of concern, and a lot of patience is required to get to a solution.

But we have achieved those. All six parties, to include North Korea, agree that the Korean Peninsula should be denuclearized, and now we're trying to figure out how to get to that point. North Koreans saying, you know, "You keep showing us hostility and until we're sure you're not hostile toward us, we've got to sort of keep this." And we say, "We have no intention of invading you. We're not pursuing a hostile policy toward you. We can't help you until you get rid of this nuclear program." And so we're using multilateralism. We're using diplomacy. We're using negotiations.

Back into your question, the first question, we did the same thing in Iraq. The President did not invade Iraq on the 12th

of September of 2002. He went to the UN, and he said, "For 12 years, Iraq has been stiffing your resolutions. They have been not -- they have not been answering the questions that were left over from the inspection regime." There was this body of intelligence that was relied upon by the previous administration when they bombed in 1998 when President Clinton found it necessary to do that, it was a body of intelligence that the United Kingdom and Australia and all of the other major countries that have intelligence organizations accepted, that Saddam Hussein had the intention to have these weapons, the capability to have these weapons. He's had them in the past. He's used them in the past. I've been to the village that he gassed in 1988, so there's no illusions about this guy and what he would do.

What we also thought he had, which we now cannot find, were stockpiles. And so we haven't found the stockpiles. We all thought the stockpiles were there. I certainly did. And the reason I thought they were there is because that was the considered judgment of the intelligence community, as presented to the Congress, to the President, to me and presented to other governments.

And so we tried to do it with the international community, but after a number of months the President felt that it was not going to work and we couldn't delay any longer because Saddam would slip out of the sanctions noose and then he would have his intention and capability and no constraints on him. And with a willing coalition of likeminded nations, we undertook military operations.

So our first choice is not preemption. Our first choice is diplomacy. Our first choice is negotiating. Our first choice is getting a coalition. We're more successful at that than I think we get credit for. We're doing it in Korea. We're doing it in Iran. We worked with the British in cutting a deal with the Libyans, and the Libyans are giving up their weapons so fast we're kind of shocked. You know, I cut my teeth negotiating with the Russians. We had to pull everything out of them. You had to see where they were hiding everything. In the case of the Libyans, they said, "Here it is. Oop, you missed that. Here, come up, there's more over here."

A cognitive dissonance came into play here and I couldn't believe when I'm ending my career, you know, after all these years of being involved in arms control, to see, you know, as Secretary of State that I have a country that is giving this stuff up willingly. And that was done with negotiation and diplomacy, but always behind the door is the threat of force. Not a bad diplomatic tool to have. Doesn't mean you use it in the first instance. Nobody likes war. The President doesn't like war.

MS. BUCHANAN: Mr. Secretary, let me ask you a question. What's happening today differently when intelligence information is presented to you and to other Administration officials? What are you personally doing different, in terms of asking questions, making sure that the information that is being presented that you use to make decisions is better information than that you may have received as you made decisions regarding (inaudible)?

SECRETARY POWELL: I've become, as you might expect, far more demanding and far more questioning to make sure that I understand all the implications of what I'm receiving and getting deeper into where they got it from, the sourcing of it. After the inspectors left Iraq in 1998, we lost one of the principal sources of solid intelligence on what was going on, and for a period of years, until the war, we were going on reports from dissidents and people who didn't have as good a set of information as we hoped they did.

But the analysts who worked on this were confident of the information they were getting so that they could make the judgments that they made and presented to me, presented to the Director of Central Intelligence and presented to the President and to the Congress and to the world. I'm the one who presented the intelligence case to the world.

It turned out subsequently that a lot of those sources were not solid, and we relied on them; but if we had known more about them, as we subsequently learned after, you know, the war was over and we could see inside the country for the first time, we wouldn't have placed so much credence in those sources. We acknowledge that. The Agency comes and sees me on a fairly regular basis to tell me what went wrong, and so I find that I ask more penetrating questions.

They also do some terrific things. They will come in with some stuff that I can't discuss, of course, but they will come in and show me stuff, and I'll say, "This is absolutely amazing. Tell me how you got it." And they tell me, we discuss it and challenge it, and it turns out to be right on. And a few days later, a terrorist is arrested somewhere or we have cued a foreign country on something that's about to happen there or who is responsible for something that did happen, and suddenly more people are arrested. Or, more significantly but even more silently, something doesn't happen that somebody intended to happen but was prevented from happening because the intelligence community did its job.

And so these are hardworking, dedicated people. They were not politically influenced. My own intelligence service in the State Department, INR, as it's called, also believed that these stockpiles were there, although they challenged certain parts of the case that I was being given. They said we're not so sure about this. That's what I like. I like them when they're, you know, when they're challenging a case. So you take the case back to the Central Intelligence people and say, "Look, our folks are saying we've got to look at this more closely." They do, and sooner or later somebody has to make the judgment, and the person in charge to do that is the Director of Central Intelligence.

The famous aluminum tubes. There was a strong body of intelligence that said they could be centrifuges, but there were other people, including my folks, who were saying, "We're not sure, so tell the CIA we're not sure." "Are you sure? Get more technical experts." They look at it, they look at it, and they came to the conclusion, we believe, that this is the purpose for which they were intended.

And after it's over, they get more information after the battles, after the war, and now they're not sure of that judgment anymore and I no longer know whether they are centrifuges or rocket bodies. Intelligence is always penetrating someone's deepest secrets. Somebody doesn't want you to know what you're trying to know and gain knowledge of. And so it is a constant battle of wits, and more often than not they get it right. And when they don't get it right, it tends to be a big story and tends to produce the wrong results -- the wrong answers.

MR. LANG: What do you think is the best way to go on an intelligence czar? Should that person have budgetary power over --

SECRETARY POWELL: Were you at our meeting this morning? (Laughter.)

MR. LANG: I wish I was.

SECRETARY POWELL: I bet you do. (Laughter.)

No, we had a long discussion of this this morning in the White House. The President wasn't there. He was out here. And we are debating this. This has to be done very carefully. The President clearly recognizes that there is a need for a National Intelligence Director, and when he announced that he wanted to move in this direction he said, "You know,

we're looking at exactly what this person should do." And so the budget authority is spread in a number of different places, with the Pentagon having the bulk of it because they have the bulk of the agencies that do this work -- the NRO, the Geospatial Agency and DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency.

And so a lot of what DOD does with this money, for example, is tactical intelligence that is directly related to how the troops fight in the battlefield and it has nothing to do with the kind of intelligence I get to make strategic policy choices on. So before we start moving all that around, we have to be very sure we understand the implications of it. And as the President said, take your time, study it; but let's not take up too much time with it, but we want to get it right.

So I can't answer your question because there is no answer yet. We're still studying the roles, missions and authorities of a National Intelligence Director.

MS. AMOS: If the President is reelected, do you want to continue to serve in your current role and plan to? And does that have any bearing on your decision about not speaking at the Republican Convention?

SECRETARY POWELL: This story got just loose. I didn't refuse to speak at the Republican National Convention or go to it. The President told me I couldn't go to it. It's the tradition that the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor -- and they've added now the Homeland Security boss, Tom Ridge -- do not go to the Convention. There have been some exceptions in the past where some cabinet members have shown up on the last night to sit in the box, but we were told not to go because the President didn't want, in any way, the war cabinet, as he calls us, as we are designated, in any way, to be seen as participating in any kind of parochial political event, no matter how much it might benefit him. And he's made that clear to us.

But the way the story got written, it said, "Powell Stiffs Republican Convention." I went to the last two and spoke at the last two, as you know, but in this case the President was rather clear about it. Somebody told me last night some radio talk show had done a 30-minute segment on Powell stiffing the Convention.

MS. AMOS: What about my first question? Do you --

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't remember. What was it?

MS. AMOS: Are you going to serve --

SECRETARY POWELL: I remember, yeah. (Laughter.) The only answer I ever give to this question, the only answer you can give, is that I serve at the pleasure of the President. And I serve at the pleasure of the President. I do not have a term of office, so I serve at the pleasure of the President and we'll see what that means in the period after the election.

MR. WELLS: A great deal has been made of the -- about the military service of John Kerry more than 30 years ago and the fact that the President was in the Air National Guard more than 30 years ago. You've had a somewhat more extensive military career. How important is it to the American -- to the voters? Does it matter what sort -- to think about the service that these men had 30-some years ago? Not as the (inaudible).

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah. You know, the voters will make that judgment. Both served and they both can say that

they served their nation when their nation needed their service. It was 30 years ago and I think the American people are wise enough to put that in perspective and context. And what the American people are, I think, going to judge the two candidates on are what are they ready to do for this country and for me now, and they will look at a full range of issues, from character to experience to judgment and a lot of other things that every American will weigh in his or her own mind before casting a vote. But they both served.

MR. MCCAULEY: Getting back to another humanitarian issue, are we doing enough -- we being the United States -- enough on the global war against AIDS? I know we took a lot of criticism back in the summer at the conference.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah. We are doing an enormous amount. The United States contribution is twice as large as the rest of the world combined. When we came into office, I think it was within the first month, and I really got up to speed on some of the issues and HIV/AIDS was presented to me and I looked into it, and I called Secretary Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and I said, "Tommy, this really is a challenge for both of us. It is a health issue for you and it is a foreign policy issue for me because this disease is destroying societies, not just killing people, it's destroying families, it's destroying societies, it's destroying the working, middle-age, young and middle-aged segments of populations -- the parents, the teachers, the doctors in these undeveloped countries. And you and I have got to work together on this. We've got to go see the President."

We did. And the President immediately charged Tommy and I to work on this and we helped Kofi Annan set up the Global Health Fund and we have had made contributions to that steadily.

A year or so later, though, the President saw that the Global Health Fund was up and running, not as fast as it could be, and he elected to bilaterally, in addition to the Global Health Fund, in addition to what we already were doing with HIV/AIDS in a number of places, he wanted to ratchet up our effort with an emergency effort. And so, in addition to what we were doing, he added a bunch more money to take it up to \$15 billion and he directed it against the challenge of educating and training people to protect themselves, the procurement and use of anti-retroviral and other drugs to prolong and save life, education programs so that people are taught not to stigmatize those with HIV/AIDS so they can continue to be productive citizens in their society. He directed me to create an office in the State Department, led by a wonderful man, Randy Tobias, and we have just recently announced the first 15 recipients of money from the President's Emergency Fund.

So that \$15 billion, plus all the money that goes into the National Institutes of Health and elsewhere in our society to find cures and find drugs, and the efforts we're also making to push down the cost of generic anti-retroviral drugs -- we've had some success -- says that we are doing a heck of a lot and we should be proud of what we're doing.

Is it enough to deal with the problem that's out there? No. Eight thousand people a day are dying. It is a destroyer of societies and we all ought to do more. But this Administration and this nation is doing a heck of a lot and we have really scaled things up over the last three and a half years, and I hope we will continue to scale things up. The challenge is that great.

MR. WELLS: Are there any specific programs --

SECRETARY POWELL: Not just HIV/AIDS but the other infectious diseases that tend to become more problematic

because people are weakened by HIV/AIDS. Tuberculosis. You know, measles and other things that are coming back.

Sorry.

MR. WELLS: Are there any specific programs that you think we ought to be pushing that we aren't currently?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we could do more in terms of procuring generic drugs. We can always use more money there. We can always use more NGOs involved in the effort so we can partner with NGOs. The private sector could do a lot more. We need more public-private partnerships. There are a number of people working on this to mobilize corporate companies, corporate entities, to work on it.

All of the companies in the United States who have subsidiaries overseas in these countries should be doing more to use those factories and workplaces to educate their people and to be places where anti-retrovirals can be distributed from because there is that infrastructure. So we are working on public-private partnerships -- Mr. Tobias is doing that -- and pushing down the cost of drugs.

This Administration has been committed to every part of the program. Abstinence is an important part, training is an important part, condoms are an important part. We have probably doubled or tripled -- two and a half times as many condoms are being purchased now as were being purchased when we came into office.

So we think the program has to be attacked on every front: training; teaching young people how to protect themselves; and the surest protection is abstinence until you are, you know, a responsible person and indulge in sex; and how to protect yourself if you are putting -- if you are engaging in sex in a dangerous way, how to protect yourself. And every one of that is -- every element of the battle, every part of the battle, is an important part.

MS. HAMILTON: Mr. Secretary, the President makes no bones about the fact that when asked if the United States would withdraw troops or if the Iraqi government requested that we do so, he would. Could you elaborate a little bit more? Just, you know, where does that end decision rest? I mean, who ultimately decides if the Iraqi troops have been trained well enough, the Iraqi government is prepared to carry on? When -- you know, who decides? Is it the Iraqis? Is it us? When do we leave?

SECRETARY POWELL: It's the Iraqis who will decide. It was a controversial issue in the spring when people said, "Okay, you're going to stand up a government and you're going to call it sovereign" -- and I'm the one who caught the question, I forget where it was when I caught it. "But if they are sovereign -- "

A PARTICIPANT: On the Hill.

SECRETARY POWELL: On the Hill, yeah. "If they are fully sovereign, well, then can they turn around and ask you to leave? And if they did, would you leave?" And I said yes -- and a big controversy. And I said, "That's what sovereignty means, but I'm not worried about it because they don't have the capacity to protect themselves or to secure the country and they won't ask us to leave, they'll invite us to stay until they do have the capacity to do that," which is exactly what they did.

And then in the UN resolution that was passed, that essentially codified this approach forward. The resolution said that next January, after a new transitional government has been elected, then that transitional government should review the arrangement and see if it wants to make another choice. But that government can also ask us to leave and we would leave. We don't stay where we're not asked to stay by a legitimate government. We consider the government that's there now legitimate for the purpose of getting to elections, a caretaker government, getting to elections at the end of the year, and then a representative government comes in to finish work on a constitution and, based on that constitution, a full election at the end of 2005.

And we're going to get there. If it was not for this insurgency, people would be applauding everything that's going on with respect to democracy building, with respect to reconstruction, with respect to fixing the infrastructure and what we have done. But the reality is that insurgency is there and it's got to be defeated. This is not something we can walk away from and we won't walk away from it, either in Afghanistan or in Iraq. We can't go backwards. We shouldn't go backwards. We've got people who are expecting a better future, a brighter future, and want that brighter future.

When I was in Afghanistan earlier this year -- when was it, February or something like that? March. At one point, roughly 2 million people had registered and I had serious concerns as to whether we would hit the minimum number needed for an election, which was around 6 million, and we're almost close to 10 million. These people are coming out. I went to a registration site for women and they were lined up and they were sitting there, and some had their head covered, some did not have their head covered, and they wanted their form, they wanted to fill out their form. They wanted to be part of what was going to happen in this country now.

And we still have challenges there. The Taliban is still active in some parts of the country. But these people want to vote. A statistic the President didn't use today in his speech, I don't think -- I wasn't able to hear it but I didn't see it in the draft, but I may use it tonight -- and that is 3 million Afghan refugees left the refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran and went back to Afghanistan over the last two and a half years. Three million people walked back home to see what was there and to start a new life. That's quite a vote of confidence in what they think the future of their country can be with the help of the international community.

MR. TOWNS: I wanted to ask about the search for -- there's been a lot of talk about Muqtada al-Sadr as well as Saddam Hussein. I want to get back to Usama bin Laden in terms of the search for him and where we are on that project.

SECRETARY POWELL: The best information that we have is that he is still somewhere in the area on the Pakistan-Afghan border in the southeast part of the country. Tough country. Very remote. Not that hard to hide.

I've chased people in the course of my career. I chased Manuel Noriega around Panama City in 1989 when I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I chased Mohamed Adid in 1993 in Somalia looking for him. And now we're chasing Usama bin Laden around.

If somebody doesn't communicate normally, in a way that can be detected, and if someone is careful about hiding oneself, and you know the country, it is not that difficult to avoid detection for an extended period of time. And then one day your luck runs out. Saddam Hussein's luck ran out and we found him hiding in a hole. Literally. I mean, you saw the pictures. He was hiding in a hole. Somebody turned him in. It wasn't any satellite that found him. Somebody ratted on him and gave us enough to find out where he was. Same thing with his two sons. Same thing with most of the guys in that deck of 52 that we used to have.

And sooner or later, let's hope it happens to Usama bin Laden or he dies. We still think he's out there and probably in that region.

With Noriega, I had control of Panama City, I had control of Colon, and he surfaced at a Dairy Queen wearing boxer shorts. (Laughter.) This is not the way it was supposed to happen. It was supposed to be, you know, catch him and catch him in uniform with his medals on. No, he was -- he finally decided that he couldn't stay on the run.

And I'll never forget General Thurman calling me and saying, "Well, we know where he is."

"Where is he, Max? Bring him in."

"It's not that easy."

"Well, where is he?"

"He turned himself in to the Vatican, the Papal Nuncio."

I said, "So where is he?"

"He's in the Papal Nuncio's house and, you know, it's protected diplomatic property. So that's where he is."

I said, "Well, where did the Papal Nuncio get him?"

"Well, he went to a Dairy Queen and got in a phone booth and called the Papal Nuncio and they went out there and got him."

"A Dairy Queen?"

"A Dairy Queen."

"Nice, Max."

(Laughter.)

And then it took us a few weeks to convince the Papal Nuncio that you don't have a very -- you know, he'll wear out his hospitality, and when he does, let us know and we'll find a place for him, which we did. A federal prison in Atlanta. (Laughter.)

MS. MILLER: Thank you, all.

A PARTICIPANT: Thank you very much.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much.

Released on August 17, 2004

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