



Interview With the USA Today Editorial Board

Secretary Colin L. Powell

Washington, DC
October 18, 2004

(2:00 p.m. EDT)

SECRETARY POWELL: Okay, thank you very much, and I'll be brief because, since you are a fairly large group, I want to not constrain your time on my giving a lecture.

But it's a pleasure to have you here in the Department. These are interesting and exciting times, not only in the Department, but in the life of our nation, as we move forward on so many areas of opportunity and deal with some challenges. First, the challenges: Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East peace process. In Afghanistan, we have seen a remarkable event just a week or so ago with the election. I spoke to President Karzai today and Prime Minister Abdullah, and through them, congratulated the Afghan people for coming out in such numbers, and the numbers are holding up. I expect the first one million votes have been counted, and I expect there will be well over six million actual people who were able to get to a poll on that single day.

And they ignored the Taliban threats and the al-Qaida threat. They crossed rivers where bridges had been blown and stood in line at three o'clock in the morning. You've all seen the pictures and the reporting on it. It says the Afghan people appreciate this opportunity to decide their future and decide who their leaders will be. And the coalition, and especially the United States, is very proud to have a part of that. There's still a lot more that has to be done, but we are committed to that work.

We also believe there is no reason we can't do the same thing in Iraq. We have a far more difficult insurgency to deal with in Iraq, but our commanders are working at it, our troops are doing a terrific job, and General Petraeus is doing quite a job in building up the Iraqi security forces.

We have a plan that is now coherent. Everybody understands it. It reflects full integration of our military efforts and our political efforts, and we are also doing it with a sovereign government, which makes, I think, a significant difference. You have a sovereign government that is being supported by the coalition and by the United States with complete integration of our political and military thinking, and with adjustment in our reconstruction plan so that we get some fast spending money out there, and money that will help build up at a more rapid rate the Iraqi security forces, which also is an employment program, which is one of our problems.

And so, all of that comes together, but I won't underestimate the challenge that is ahead of us, the difficult challenge that is ahead of us. But there is no reason to believe that the Iraqi people don't want the same thing that the Afghans want, and that is the opportunity to choose their own leaders. They don't want to see this violence. They don't want to see foreign forces in Iraq. They want to be responsible for their own future and their own security, and we're all marching in that direction.

The Middle East peace process is an area where I hope we can see some movement with Prime Minister Sharon's commitment to his disengagement plan, and if we can get some movement on the Palestinian side to reform themselves and empower a Prime Minister who can deal with the political challenge of taking over Gaza and getting to take over parts of the West Bank, then I think we can get back on the roadmap track. The roadmap is still alive and well, as far as the President and all the rest of us are concerned, and notwithstanding reports to the contrary, Mr. Sharon understands that the roadmap is essential, because what will bring peace to the region is not just unilateral disengagement, but ultimately, agreement between the two parties that will create a Palestinian state that lives side by side in peace with Israel.

Those are the big three challenges, but there are so many other things that are going well that don't always get immediate attention. I believe that the relationship that the United States has with some of the major powers in the world is a good relationship. If you look at where we are with China, started in April of 2001 with a major incident. It's hard to imagine that was three and a half years ago, but it was. And our airplane was in a collision with theirs; they lost their pilot. And it threw us immediately into something of a deep freeze, but we solved that diplomatically in a period of roughly 13 days. I may write a book one day just about those 13 days.

With clever use of words and understanding one another's needs and positions, we not only were able to solve the problem, get our crew back, and then sometime later, get the plane back as well, but we created the basis of talking to one another and how we should work with one another to resolve such problems in the future.

And we've been following that model for the last three and a half years, and it has put our relationship with China, I think, on the solidest foundation it has been for the 30-odd years of the relationship. The President has a good relationship with Chinese leaders, the previous leadership team and now the new leadership team, and I have similar relations with my Chinese colleagues, and we talk constantly about different issues, and I'm looking forward to seeing them this weekend when I go off on a very quick trip with -- are you still going, Barbara? Barbara loves traveling with me. (Laughter.) It's such a leisurely trip around the world. (Laughter.)

But we do have a good relationship with China. We don't ignore human rights issues, and we don't ignore proliferation and other issues. And we deal with those issues and we talk with them. We sanction their companies, we make it harder for the EU to lift its arms embargo on China because of our concerns about human rights. And so we have a mature relationship, where we build on those things we can build on, and in those areas that we have disagreements, we work on those disagreements. There is no single cliché or term that I or the President use to characterize our relationship with China, but it's a good one.

Similarly, with India and Pakistan, things have changed very, very -- in very, very important ways over the last three and a half years. Pakistan, in a period of 72 hours after 9/11, went from a supporter of the Taliban to an enemy of the Taliban. And we couldn't have done what we did in Afghanistan without the assistance of President Musharraf and the Pakistanis.

And in recent months, they have become even more aggressive in going after al-Qaida and the Taliban in the tribal areas of Afghanistan in order to stabilize the situation, and it was quite a moment to see President Karzai and President Musharraf together in New York at the time of the UNGA meeting.

Similarly with India. We have built a very strong relationship based on trade but also mutual security interests in the region. We have entered into a new strategic partnership with the Indian Government. And we have tried to do it in a way that the Indians recognize that this is U.S.-India relations, and it doesn't mean U.S.-Pakistan-India relations. We see each country as separate and distinct, and because we treat each other as a single bilateral partner with us, it gives us more standing to encourage them to do things together.

Two years ago, as you may recall, we were facing a crisis, a major, major crisis. And many people were telling me all week long, there's going to be a war this weekend and it might go nuclear. It didn't happen, and it didn't happen because a lot of people worked on it over an extended period of time; the United States, United Kingdom, China -- a lot of my colleagues and I spent an enormous amount of time on this and found a way to stop that mobilization or at least freeze it until we could get it moving in the other direction.

And I'll never forget the day that President Musharraf, in one of our conversations, as the conversation was ending and the crisis had started to abate about then, said to me, "Do you think if my Prime Minister, the Pakistani Prime Minister, were to call the Indian Prime Minister, he would take the call?" I said, "I'll call you back in a little

while." And we set it up, the call was made. We also arranged for the call to be "How are you?" "Fine. How are you?" "Fine." -- just to begin this dialogue. And now the dialogue has paid off with the return of diplomatic relations, travel between the two countries, and the ministers are meeting and talking about the major outstanding issues that are still there between the two countries. They're talking about cross-border infiltration, talking about Kashmir, and no longer ignoring these issues, but they also know that they have to have time and patience in which to engage. And I think that's been a success of the Administration.

We've done a great deal with respect to opening up trade. A number of trade agreements have been signed of a bilateral nature. We've got the WTO rounds underway. We are working on regional trade agreements, CAFTA, the Middle East area, and hope to have a trade agreement that will spread across the Middle East, all of these working under I think the absolutely brilliant leadership of Bob Zoellick.

The President has also launched us again some of the -- against some of the basic issues that give rise to fundamentalism and give rise to disenchanting people who would move in the direction of terrorism. The Millennium Challenge Account, I think, is one of the most significant achievements of this Administration. The President announced it in his State of the Union Address in January of 2003, and some 15 months later, we had up and running a corporation that's outside of government but in government -- I'm the chairman of the corporation -- and Paul Applegarth is the CEO. It was about 15 months, which by government standards, I can assure you, sir, is something of a record, and it already has started to dispatch a billion dollars. We got an appropriation of a billion dollars, and 16 countries are now entering the compacts with us in order to determine how best to support their infrastructure.

These 16 countries are moving in the direction of democracy -- it's a different kind of aid -- moving in the direction of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, the end of corruption. They're doing the right kinds of things for their people, and we will support them with this funding.

At the same time, normal funding, USAID-kind of funding that is need-based and not just democracy-based, it has doubled in the four years of this Administration. So the President has really made a commitment to our development assistance: poverty, clean water, food, and all the other things that the world needs.

The President also launched a major initiative against the most devastating weapon of mass destruction on earth, HIV/AIDS, not only with setting up with Kofi Annan and others the Global Health Fund, but shortly after he took office, Tommy Thompson and I spoke on a weekend and said we've got to make sure that our President -- this was in February or March of 2001 -- that this Administration, this President, is fully behind this, and we went to see the President two days later. He bought in immediately. Tommy and I formed a task force between the two of us. We supported the Global Health Fund. A couple years later, a year and a half later, the President said that isn't enough, we've got to do more. And so he created the Emergency Fund, and we have now asked for some \$15 billion over a three- or four-year period from the Congress to go after this weapon of mass destruction, and Randy Tobias is now running that program for us in a very effective way.

With respect to the Eurasian land mass, if I can put it that way, we have developed a very good and strong relationship with the Russian Federation, and we had some concerns about some of the things that are happening inside of Moscow, and when we have these concerns, we don't hide them. We talk to them about it. The President talked to President Putin about it. I've been to Russia. I've written letters to the editor in *Izvestia*, which are not always received with delight. Nevertheless, our policy towards Russia is to work with them in areas where we cooperate and have mutual interest in, and where there are disagreements, let's work through these disagreements, let's not hide them.

Something that's seldom written about is that for the last 50 years, the whole southern belt of Eurasia, the Caucasus and Central Asia; that was always the Near Abroad for the old Soviet Union, yet the United States has got a presence in almost every one of those "Stans", and we're also working with Armenia and Azerbaijan to do something about Nagorno-Karabakh, and all of those nations now are in some kind of relationship with the United States that would have been unimaginable 15 or 20 years ago, and what is even more interesting is that it is with the understanding, for the most part, and with cooperation and collaboration with the Russian Federation.

It isn't that they don't sometimes get nervous and we have to discuss it. But the fact of the matter is we're there, and as my former colleague Igor Ivanov once said in response to a question he received, why are the Americans over there? Aren't they the enemy? And his answer was, "No, the enemy is now terrorism, the enemy is illegal immigration, the enemy is drugs, the enemy is radicalism, and the United States and Russia are working together."

And we demonstrated that, I think, very vividly in Georgia last November when Shevardnadze became in a very difficult position, an untenable position, and it was clear that there was going to be a revolution in Tbilisi unless something was done. And over the course of a weekend, between what we did, in my direct conversations with the Russian Foreign, Igor Ivanov, and Ivanov going to Tbilisi and I'm talking to Igor as he landed in Tbilisi and talked to him as he went in to see Shevardnadze, and Shevardnadze realized it was best for him to step aside. And then in two months' time, working with the Russians and the Georgians, we had a free, open, fair election that by January, first week in January, brought into place the new president, Saakashvili, what is now known as the Rose -- movement of the Rose Revolution, that was good, solid diplomacy on their part.

In our hemisphere, we have done a lot with establishment of a Community of Democracies within the OAS, with respect to the bilateral trade agreements that we've entered into with Chile and the one we're in with CAFTA. We had an expansion of the Andean Free Trade Area, and I think we have good bilateral relations with the countries of the region.

I've been to Latin America just about as much as my two predecessors made trips to Latin America, because I think it's an important part of our world; it's in backyard. Some challenging issues will come up in the next term because of immigration issues that we still have to work on. We were working on them hard in 2001, and then 9/11 kind of threw us a curve.

In Africa, just to switch quickly, in Africa, we've had some movement with respect to expanded Growth and Opportunity Act issues. We played a role in ending the crisis in Liberia last year with just about the right amount of military presence at the time that we were getting ECOWAS and AU to step forward. A little Marine amphibious operation with a couple hundred GIs on the ground was all it took to get Charles Taylor out of power.

We've worked with our French friends and our other friends in the region to deal with the crises in Cote d'Ivoire and DRC and other places of that kind. In the Sudan, I think it's fair to say the United States has been in the forefront of trying to get a ceasefire, of trying to get the aid in, and trying to expedite the movement of AU peacekeepers into the region.

I spent time over the weekend with President Obasanjo, a couple of phone calls to energize the AU to put in place the Rwandan troops so we can get an American military aircraft to them and get them moved into the Darfur region. The food is falling, the aid is falling, but the population of needy people is growing because the security situation hasn't stabilized. So the priority for us now is to get in those AU monitors and just to -- I think the African leaders will say that in the last four years, they have seen an Administration that has been responsive to the concerns of the continent.

And just to switch back to Asia briefly, I think that our relationship with our other allies in Asia, be it Japan, South Korea, Australia -- our other ally in that part of the world, Thailand, as well as the Philippines, are all on solid ground. Asia really is an area of stability, except for the tension that exists with the North Korean nuclear weapons program. And we did this in a very multilateral way, sometimes accused of not acting multilaterally, then when we do, we're accused of acting multilaterally. But we believe that what the North Koreans were doing was a danger to the region, not just to the United States, and should not just be placed on the United States' agenda.

So we energized all of North Korea's neighbors, and North Korea has to deal with all its neighbors. One thing all six parties agreed to, including the North Koreans, and they said it again today, and that was the Peninsula should be denuclearized. So we're trying to find the way to make that happen, and I expect there will be another set of six-party talks. And this is an area where you have to have patience and determination, and where you have to be very firm in your approach to the negotiations so that you can achieve success.

The only other place I touch on, because it's of such topical interest, and that has to do with Iran. Similarly, in Iran, we are concerned about their program. We've been concerned since we came in. President Bush identified this early on. It took us a while to persuade the Russians and the IAEA and other members of the international

community that there was a challenge here, that they were moving in the direction of a nuclear weapons program. It's still our judgment; not everybody agrees with us. But everybody does agree that they have been doing things that are inconsistent with their obligations under their IAEA commitments and NPT, and we have been supportive of our European Union, the three foreign ministers -- France, Germany and the United Kingdom -- as they have tried to find a solution.

We believe it should have been referred to the Security Council a year ago, but we have worked with our European friends as they have tried to find a solution that would perhaps avoid that; I don't think they can but we're willing to let them try. They were here on Friday, the political directors of the G-8, and we talked about it some more, following up from the dinner I had with the G-8 in New York at the time of UNGA, and we gave them, you know, you want to go try again, be our guest. But we can't keep putting this off, and we believe November is the time to refer it to the Security Council if Iran has not come into complete compliance with what their obligations are.

And so, we have been doing a lot over the last three and a half years. And I won't take you through every little issue. We could go to Haiti. We could go to the agreement we signed with Greenland. (Laughter.) We could go to the F-15s we have in Iceland. We could go to the solution to the problem with the Parsley Islands off the coast of Morocco. We could go to Haiti, which is topical.

But the only purpose of all of this is to show that it is a busy time. It's a challenging time, and the opportunities to do things that are important and vital for the future security of the world have not been missed, even as we have been dealing with some of the challenges.

The global war on terrorism is being prosecuted fully by this Administration, by this President, and we believe that Afghanistan and Iraq are an essential part of that. The President also believes that we did this with partners. If you read his National Security Strategy, that's what most of it talks about, partnerships, not preemption. Preemption is not a strategy. Preemption is a technique, a tool that's been around forever. The strategy he talks about is partnership.

That's why we willingly supported a large expansion of NATO to 26 nations. Fully supported with others the expansion of the European Union. That's why he goes to the UN on a regular basis, first, to pull the wool off everyone's eyes with respect to what Saddam Hussein was all about. Last year, he went there to say, "We need a Proliferation Security Initiative," and a resolution has been passed on that. He's gone to the UN to say we need to do more about trafficking in persons, and we got a trafficking in persons program that is really making clear to the world that this is an abomination in the 21st century that people would traffic in women and children in the most abusive way.

And he goes to the UN with these kinds of challenges and responsibilities. And when he sees that we should do more internationally, we do it. We rejoined UNESCO sometime ago. And so, we are fully supportive of the UN role in the world. We paid the arrears up. I give due credit to Jesse Helms and Dick Holbrook, one of the most remarkable combinations in the history of foreign policy. (Laughter.) But they did it. They put in place a plan, but it was this Administration that came in, bought into that plan, and then paid the money, and I went and got the money from the Congress at the President's direction.

So, we have been doing all of these things, but we want to do more. One more, and I'll give you all of this time back. Don't worry. You told me to say a few words. One final thing I'll just touch on because it's reflective of what we're trying to do. We believe democracy and human rights and open markets put together is a successful system of governance and political control and social welfare in the 21st century. We also know that not every nation is waiting for a Jeffersonian democracy to arrive, but every nation can benefit from our experience and the experience of our industrialized partners.

So we have now launched this broader Middle East and North African initiative. It didn't start out smoothly because a leak suggested that, "Here, this is the American way to do it and you do it." And it took us several months, a great deal of work, going around to our Arab friends and others saying, "No, that's not what we have in mind." What we have in mind is: You know that reform is needed and modernization is needed. The Arab Development Report for two years in a row has said that. You had the Alexandria Library Conference in Egypt which said we've got to do better. We've got to prepare these young people we have coming up for a 21st century world.

They have to be educated and they have to be put in a civic society in a political system that will generate jobs, an economic system based on that political system that will generate jobs and attract investment in order to take care of these people who are coming along, these youngsters, so each of you know you have to reform in some manner, but the United States cannot possibly describe a system that would work as well for Bahrain or Morocco as it would for Saudi Arabia or for Egypt.

Each one of you has to determine what you could do based on your culture, your history, your state of political development, and what you think you can sell to your people, what your people will accept and what you believe is correct for your society, and what you will find is the United States -- and the G-8 standing with us, G-8 partners -- standing by ready to help. And we launched the first meeting of this -- what is now called the Forum for the Future, four, three Fridays ago, four Fridays ago, in New York. I co-chaired it with my Moroccan colleague.

People thought we'd never get this thing going; 28 nations came, all sat there. The G-8 and all of the rest were from the Arab world and North Africa, the broader Middle East and North Africa. And the most startling presentation was after we opened it, and I made some typical Foreign Secretary remarks and my colleague made some Foreign Secretary remarks.

We then turned it over to an Arab business leader to talk, and he looked them all in the eye and said, "The number one issue facing the Arab world in the 21st century --" and everybody leaned forward, expecting to hear Palestine; what he said was "unemployment." If we don't do something about unemployment, we are all doomed. And that began the conference. And then other civic society leaders spoke and when the meeting was over, we had multiple volunteers to chair the next one. Now, I have a problem as to who to ask to do it. And so, it's off to a good start.

Lots of challenges, lots of opportunities, lots of difficult times that we've been through, difficult times that we'll still go through, but I believe that we have demonstrated to the world that we want to be partners with those nations who wish to be partners with us and friends with us, and we will take on the challenges that come along and deal with the risks that are out there to our safety, the safety and security of our friends in the world, and the promise of a better 21st century for everyone. Okay?

QUESTION: That was quite a tour.

SECRETARY POWELL: Do you want more?

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Let's go first to --

SECRETARY POWELL: Do you want to do whaling?

QUESTION: Whaling. (Laughter.) Somehow I don't think we're going to get to whaling.

Let's start first with Iraq.

SECRETARY POWELL: Sure.

QUESTION: The timeframe until the election is getting tight. You have the obstacles that you outlined and more. What's your view of the best and worst case on election day, and what's your view of the best and worst case, longer-term, in Iraq, particularly given, as you say, the Middle East is not eagerly waiting to install Jeffersonian

democracy?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think that it's still possible to have the kind of election we want to have by the end of January. My staff reported this morning that the procedures and institutions are being put in place, that a registration will begin on the 1st of November. The UN is anxious to come in and help. The problem there, of course, is security and we're working hard to provide the necessary security for the additional UN personnel to come in.

Keep in mind though that it is not the UN that is running the election, it is the Iraqi institutions that are running the election with the UN assistance, and they're moving ahead to do it. And so, rather than view worst case or best case, which I'm not sure I can do that, the case I will give you is that we are doing everything over the next several months. Our security efforts, our political efforts, our reconstruction efforts, our work with the UN and our work with our coalition partners to put in place conditions that will permit an election on the 31st of January, 2005, and everybody is committed to that and working toward that end, and there is no reason that date cannot be achieved.

QUESTION: Longer term in Iraq?

SECRETARY POWELL: Longer term in Iraq. If we hit that date -- I think we can -- and if the Iraqi forces build up at the rate that General Petraeus has them building up, then increasingly the Iraqi forces should be able to provide for more of the security of the country than they can now. And that should reduce the burden on coalition forces, and especially the United States. Get through that election and the Iraqi people have spoken and nobody can say it is an illegitimate government or it is something that's just there at the whim of the United States and the Security Council, but it is there because a transitional national assembly put the government in place. And I think it has far better legitimacy.

The key though is security. The key is building up the Iraqi forces to make them competent, fully equipped, and able to do the job. In the last three weeks, we have seen a few things happen that don't take away from the seriousness of the insurgency but are somewhat encouraging:

One, Najaf. The manner in which we're able to work with political personalities in the region. The Ayatollah Sistani playing a key role at the right moment and working with others. The way in which Prime Minister Allawi was able to structure a political strategy to go along with our military strategy, to squeeze Sadr's militia, make it hard for them to do what they're doing around Najaf, make their position increasingly untenable but don't go into the center of it. Get the Iraqis ready to do that, and Iraqi battalions were ready to do that when Sistani was able to strike a deal. And they left. Najaf now is in government hands. It's still got difficulties, but it's in government hands and we're starting to flow in reconstruction money to let the people know this is what happens when you are moving in the right direction, you're in government hands.

We've done the same thing now in Samarra, a little trickier, other towns around Najaf, as well, Kufa, and other places in Samarra. Fallujah, as you have noticed in recent days, is being squeezed. You could see how we are going after the insurgents, as they can be found, in a much more aggressive way. And at the same time, Prime Minister Allawi is speaking with various leaders in Fallujah and making clear that this is an intolerable situation and it's going to be resolved, and they should be part of the resolution.

You'll see our coalition forces working with Iraqis, going in other towns in the Triangle because the Triangle is the center of gravity of all of this. In my military terms, this is where the main attack, main effort has to be. And if we can get the Triangle under control, then you give those people the freedom to participate in the political process and take their anger out or their disappointments out in the political process and not on the streets.

And if you solve that problem, then the other parts of the country, which are relatively quiet -- yes, a bomb will go off in Basra from time to time, and there's a challenge up in Mosul, but the real heart of it is in the Sunni Triangle, and that's what we're going after.

QUESTION: Looking at it a little bit longer term?

SECRETARY POWELL: Let me -- yeah, looking at it for a little longer. So, I think that if what I just said occurs, then you'll look toward the finishing of the writing of a constitution, flowing from the Transitional Administrative Law, the ratification of that constitution, and then full elections by the end of 2005.

I cannot tell you when the United States would be relieved of what part of the burden we're carrying now. I cannot tell you and I won't speculate as to what the troop levels will be because I don't know, and nor does anyone else. It really has to depend on the situation.

QUESTION: I know you can't say when, but can you say what conditions would be sufficient for you to think that troops could be pulled out, at whatever time they --

SECRETARY POWELL: The troops aren't suddenly going to be pulled out one day. I think that as you go down the path that I've described, you can start to pull the troops out, reduce the numbers that are there, don't send as many back to replace those that are coming home, and start to reconstitute our force back home. But I cannot give you the rate at which that will happen because it depends on the rate at which the improvement actually takes place, as opposed to what I speculate is going to happen. And I am reluctant to get into my colleague, Don Rumsfeld's, business with respect to troop transfers.

QUESTION: One more and I'll yield the floor to my colleagues. What do you think the lessons of Iraq are for the "Powell Doctrine"?

SECRETARY POWELL: The Powell Doctrine.

QUESTION: Has it been vindicated?

SECRETARY POWELL: Huh?

QUESTION: Has the "Powell Doctrine" been vindicated?

SECRETARY POWELL: You know, I've been looking for this "Powell Doctrine." (Laughter.) I never wrote anything that said the "Powell Doctrine." I have always believed that you apply -- it's the invention of a reporter, but we won't -- we won't go there. I accept it.

It's always been my view for many years that once you decide on a political objective and that political objective is going to require the use of military force, sufficient military force should be put in to be decisive. I don't find this much of a doctrine. It seems like common sense to me and it's pretty much the American way of war.

I am quite confident that when General Franks and his colleagues were working on this, they thought they were putting in enough. It turns out the insurgency was greater than anticipated and it grew over time. Whether more should have been put in early or not, I will let historians deal with that. I won't.

QUESTION: You made the point that the strategy of this Administration is partnership and preemption is just a tactic. I think that's what you said. John Kerry has been making the argument that, if he were President, he could do a better job of reuniting major allies with the U.S. who have abandoned this President over Iraq.

I'm curious how you see how, since it's your primary job as the chief diplomat of the U.S. Government, how would you rebuild the partnership going forward?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't accept the premise that there isn't partnership. I do not accept the premise that the 30-odd nations that are there with us now don't

constitute a partnership.

There was a serious falling out over Iraq, principally with the French and Germans, to a slightly lesser extent with the Russians. Yet we have gotten all those nations that are in NATO, France and Germany, to vote on every Iraq rebuilding resolution that's come along since. We got the French and Germans to agree to the NATO mission that's going to help train Iraqi officers. And so it's coming back together. Even those who were not part of the original, it's coming back together.

And we're cooperating with them in so many other areas. So to suggest that the disagreement over Iraq a year ago, a year and a half ago, has ruined the partnership is not accurate.

There is a French general commanding ISAF in Afghanistan, working with us. We worked it all out.

There is a French general commanding our forces in -- commanding forces in Bosnia, in the Bosnia mission. And we worked that all out.

When we had the challenge in Haiti at the end of February, the one I picked up the phone and worked out how to deal with this problem was the French Foreign Minister, and French troops went in with U.S. troops to Haiti under U.S. command. When I went to Haiti a little bit later, there was our sharp Marine brigadier general with a French colonel working for him.

And so partnerships -- there are many different parts to a partnership. I think that the estrangement that took place last year over this issue is being resolved, being patched up. Not to say there are not new challenges that have come along, such as the challenge you had with the Spanish pulling out of Iraq, but the Spanish agreed at the NATO summit to send troops to Afghanistan, an extra battalion to Afghanistan, in order to help with the election security.

And so Iraq was a problem. I'm not going to diminish that problem because I couldn't if I wanted to, because I lived through it. But that which pulls these nations together, I believe, overall, is stronger than that which occasionally pulls us apart. And so we work hard at trying to eliminate the remains, vestigial remains of the major disagreement we had last year.

QUESTION: Given everything we've now seen, looking backwards at Iraq, from intelligence, sanctions, WMD, the situation on the ground, post-war planning, looking forward, assuming that there are going to be future challenges for the U.S. with a rogue state, a dangerous dictator, what primary lessons do you take from the whole Iraq experience going forward that you would apply, let's say a new Powell Doctrine post-Iraq?

SECRETARY POWELL: When we came into office, the sanctions were falling apart. Everybody was trying to get out of them, and none more so than Saddam Hussein. I spent a year holding it together until we get something in place called "smart sanctions." By then, though, we had passed over the ability of sanctions to control the situation and he was using those sanctions against our interests.

And if anyone is willing, anyone may choose to believe that if he got free of these sanctions he would have just used that money, \$20 billion as opposed to just the \$2 billion that he was skimming, that he would use all of that \$20 billion to do sewage permits and building up the electric grid and just taking care of all of his hospital and education needs, be my guest. That's not my judgment as to what he would have done.

This is a guy that was still experimenting with long-range cannons. You remember the English gentleman who was in there trying to teach them how to make a long-range super-cannon. That's the nature of this guy. He was trying to get out of the sanctions, trying to get free of them, in order to pursue his original objectives, which is to be the dominant military power in the region, which he was prior to the first Gulf War.

With respect to the intelligence. The intelligence that, one, he had a history of doing such things: Halabja is well known to you, what he did in Iran is well known to you. He was successfully using chemical weapons against the Iranians and killed thousands of them, killed thousands of his own people, that's the history. The intention to have such a capability again, I think it's pretty clear, I think Charlie Duelfer reinforces that. The capability was there. Now, there may not have been chemical factories, you know, rolling all over the place turning out stuff, but the dual-capable infrastructure was there and he was preserving it and enhancing it and protecting it and keeping the intellectual capital over there to do that.

What we thought he had and it turned out, so far, it appears he does not have, and I don't think he has, are the stockpiles. But we believed he had stockpiles. The previous administration believed he had stockpiles and more of a capability than perhaps even we believed, and that's why President Clinton bombed that capability in 1998. That was only five years earlier when, based on that same intelligence and a target set that was given to President Clinton on the basis of that intelligence, he attacked, and then there was no transparency into what was going on five years after that, from 1998 to 2003.

How we misjudged that, why we got it wrong, I'm going to have to let a lot of study groups and experts figure that out. I don't have a good understanding of it. Bad sourcing, analysis that was flawed. But when the President was deciding this, and when the Congress was deciding on the resolution that was asked of it, and when I was looking at this in the five days I had to get ready for the UN, I spent a lot of time making sure I provided the best of what the intelligence community had, and the best of what they had said the stockpiles were there. It was also believed by the intelligence agencies of a number of countries.

Turns out, not so. Intelligence is intelligence, fact on the ground is fact on the ground. Was it hidden? Is it buried? Was it sent to another country? I have seen no evidence of that. And fact of the matter is we can't find the stockpiles, which suggests that they are not there now and they may not have been there at the time we thought they were there. That's the best answer I can put on that.

What lessons learned? I think some of them are being applied: the 9/11 Commission and its recommendations on intelligence reform. The President is determined to improve the intelligence system. He has already signed the executive order giving additional power to the CIA, more in line with their original charter, put a distinguished individual with great experience in charge of the CIA, and now he also wants a National Intelligence Director that will pull all of this together. So one of the lessons learned: We have got to do a better job with our intelligence and see where we failed, where we were successful and where we failed.

With respect to the stockpiles, we didn't get the right answer. This is not a condemnation of the whole intelligence community. I see stuff beginning at 6:30 every morning, all day long, and I am privy to many things, and our intelligence people do a rather incredible job with things they find out about the world. In this instance, we got it wrong, it appears, and we have to find out why. What did we miss in the equation that caused us to misjudge the stockpile issue?

But it wasn't because we were determined to see things that we were being told were not there. We were told those things were there, and that's why the President put that into his calculation. He did not want to take the risk of there being a nexus between these kinds of stockpiles and this kind of capability and terrorism, a nexus that was becoming more likely in this world.

And that's why we've gone after proliferation so hard, which allows me to talk about Libya. I've talked about Libya, you know what we did.

QUESTION: As you know, many people say that, whoops, we did get it wrong, we should have been going off to Iran, not Iraq, because Iran has -- supports terrorists, it's developing weapons of mass destruction. And I was wondering if you could address what are credible options that we now have and has the preemption doctrine, in fact, spurred Iran to go forward on the nuclear part? And is it a credible option that perhaps Israel might bomb Iran's nuclear facilities?

SECRETARY POWELL: With respect to Iran, Iran was moving toward a nuclear weapon long before this Administration came into office and long before anyone said

anything about preemption. It's been a long-term goal of Iran's. And Iran has been sponsoring terrorist activity and has been on the state sponsor list of terrorists long before this Administration came in.

This President has made it clear that he condemns all these activities, made it as clear as he could when he put them on what has become famously known as the "axis of evil", pointing out to the world in startling terms, which got the whole world excited, that this is a regime that is not doing good things, it's doing bad things. He then took the case to the Russians, to the IAEA, to the European Union: Something's got to be done about the major threat from Iran, which is, if they actually are able to successfully put in place a nuclear development program that leads to a nuclear weapons, which is what we think they are doing.

And in the last two years -- well, make it the whole three-and-a-half-year period of this Administration, but particularly in the last year and a half, he has put a spotlight and a heat lamp on Iran of a kind that it didn't have on it before, when people were saying, oh, you know, you guys are overreacting. But then the evidence became clear.

And so whatever the Iranians continue to do, and I think they haven't changed their mind, it's going to be more difficult for them because of the attention that has been drawn to them, the willingness of more and more nations to refer the matter to the Security Council. The Iranians have to make a judgment as to whether it's in their interest to move in this direction.

With respect to terrorists, and they know as long as they continue to support Hezbollah and similar organizations, they're just denying themselves the opportunity to join a broader world economic movement that it would be in their interest to be a part of. Sixty percent of the Iranian people are under the age of 25. These people have, perhaps, different expectations, different hopes and dreams and different access to the information on the rest of the world than their political or religious leaders understand.

But, you know, you're almost suggesting -- getting at your question -- why don't we do regime change there? The President felt that Iraq was a real and present danger, Iraq had violated 12 years of UN resolutions, Iraq had used this material in the past, there is a nexus with terrorism and it had to be dealt with.

With respect to both Iran and North Korea, and as you saw in Libya, the President is using his relations with other nations, his relationship with the international community, to apply pressure, but never taking any option off the table. So the President's first choice has always been to try to solve these things diplomatically, which is also what we tried to do in Iraq. Afghanistan was a different matter. Afghanistan was not preemption. We got hit and that's what Afghanistan was about. The only example you have of what someone might call preemption is Iraq.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, if I could follow on Iran. The Europeans --

SECRETARY POWELL: I'm sorry. About Israel, I have no idea what --

QUESTION: Is that a credible option?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, you're asking me, "What's a credible option," in the eyes of the Israelis, and I won't bite on that.

QUESTION: What I'm saying is that we've agreed there are sales of weapons to Israel, bunker-busting weapons that could do that.

SECRETARY POWELL: I'm -- no, I am not aware that we have agreed to a sale of a weapon to do that.

QUESTION: To do that? But that kind of weapon --

SECRETARY POWELL: That's your question. You have my answer. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the Europeans, the EU-3, are going to offer the Iranians a security dialogue, a broad security, strategic dialogue. Chris Patten, who I know you know well, has said that an offer like this can only be useful and strong if the United States has a part in it.

Can you envision, as a possible carrot to Iran, the U.S. taking part in a broad security dialogue discussion with the Iranians as part of a group, perhaps resuming the bilateral talks that we had back a year or so ago?

SECRETARY POWELL: The EU-3 is not taking a U.S. proposal with them. They're taking their proposal, which we have seen, and our view is, be our guest and we support your efforts, as we have for the last year. And the second message we gave them is call us as soon as you've finished to tell us the results of the conversations, and we'll see what the results of the conversations are between the EU-3, not even representing the EU but just representing the three of them, what the results of that conversation is to see whether there is any basis for further discussion, dialogue or ideas to be pursued.

QUESTION: Can you envision a U.S. role in this?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think I answered the question without speculating. There's no U.S. role in it at the moment.

QUESTION: Can you envision a U.S. role?

SECRETARY POWELL: In what?

QUESTION: In the security, broad security or a strategy dialogue with Iran.

SECRETARY POWELL: I can't envision anything until I know whether the Iranians are willing to foreswear their nuclear ambitions.

QUESTION: (Laughter.) Would you have a different answer if this were after November the 2nd?

SECRETARY POWELL: No. Why should I? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Taking up that question, this is election season and there is a lot of talk around Washington about what you might do.

SECRETARY POWELL: Oh, please, you're not going --

QUESTION: (Laughter.) And I was wondering if you would be interested in serving again as Foreign Secretary, and if so, what you would see as the challenges? And also, perhaps, you could clear up the clear impression that everybody -- that many people have in Washington that you are at odds with the Administration on many issues.

SECRETARY POWELL: You all write this story repeatedly. Your newspaper has been writing it for years, that I am somehow not in, don't involve myself in these matters and my views are always on the outside. I have just, I think, laid out a large number of areas in which I have been deeply involved in working with the President, and even in those areas where you would like to take difference with what I just said in Iraq. I strongly recommended a diplomatic approach first. The President bought it, took it to the UN. He took it to the UN. And it was either going to be resolved diplomatically or through war, and I was supportive whichever way it was going to go. And so, it's just part of the stereotyping and caricaturing that is so much fun in this town. But --

QUESTION: Can you explain why it's so persistent?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't know. You explain it to me. It's because it's easy to write and because it just goes on and on. And I -- you know, I've listed a number of areas here today that the President has taken the initiative in and moved a lot of things along, whether it has to do with Libya getting rid of all of its weapons of mass destruction; working with our partners on Iran; working with our partners on North Korea; rejoining UNESCO; the Millennium Challenge Account in Congress; HIV things; free trade agreements; a good relationship with the major countries in the world, with half the world, with just India, Pakistan, China and the Russian Federation; rebuilding our estrangements with some of the European nations and keeping alliances with all of the others; and yet this constantly causing me to be seen as, you know, somewhere outside the President's agenda. I don't know.

QUESTION: I guess one of the things it's based on as well is that there's widespread reports that the State Department came up with a cogent plan for Iraq immediately after the invasion and then it was pushed aside, and that now the State Department is helping takeover a lot but a lot has been lost. For example, you mentioned employment as part of the new plan. Do you feel frustrated about that?

SECRETARY POWELL: We could have done it differently last year, but the fact of the matter is that after a conflict there has to -- it is the role of the Department of Defense and the armed forces to win a conflict, and in the immediate aftermath of a conflict, they have responsibility. It wasn't Ambassador MacArthur who sailed in the Tokyo Bay. And that's what it takes. Only the military brings the kind of assets you need to the table to get things going again in a post-conflict environment.

Could we have done things differently? Could other advice have been offered that might have been useful? Yes.

QUESTION: Long-term, of course, changing attitudes.

SECRETARY POWELL: Did I finish with your Colin Powell?

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Can I just --

SECRETARY POWELL: Barbara, you've been doing this for --

QUESTION: I know I've been doing it for years. But, you know, I mean, Paul Bremer came out and said there weren't enough troops. The country was not stable, looting occurred, everything, you know, flowed from that. Why don't you just come out and say what you think about what happened in that period?

I know you don't want to -- you know, it wasn't your department to say how many troops were sent. But do you think in hindsight it would have been helpful if there were more troops?

SECRETARY POWELL: The President got recommendations from his military commanders. He got recommendations from General Franks. He got recommendations from General Abizaid. All of this was discussed. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was a party to all of these discussions. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Staff and the staff of the Central Command and Ambassador Bremer made his judgment known as well, I presume -- at the time, I presume, I just -- I don't know because Jerry, of course, worked for Don during this period but I was in lots of meetings where we were all together.

And I'm not going to get into, you know, whether it was enough or not enough because the President gave the military what the military said that they needed.

MR. BOUCHER: We probably have time for one or two more.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, but I kind of fouled them up at the beginning.

QUESTION: No, no, we're fine.

QUESTION: Got a long list here, too.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY POWELL: How come Barbara...Barbara is going to spend 170 hours with me.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Do you see any progress since 9/11 in changing attitudes in the Muslim world in order to make the war on terrorism effective?

SECRETARY POWELL: This has been -- I'm glad you gave me this chance, Bernie. We've lost ground in Arab opinion because of Iraq and continuing problems in the Middle East. And the overhang has also -- had to do with Homeland Security and our visa policy. And a lot of people were offended by what we had to do. I think it's starting to come back, at least the visa policy is starting to come back into normal tolerance. People understand why we ask you do the simple finger scan and picture, protecting us, but it's also protecting you, the traveler and people in other lands.

We are speeding up the whole visa process: student visas; tourist visas; business visas. It's getting a lot better. The databases are slowly but surely coming together. As soon as we can figure out multiple names it will be even better. So I think we're getting on top of that.

We are starting to reach out more with our diplomats spending a lot more time out in the countryside in the countries in the area. We set up Al-Hurra, Radio Sawa, other means of reaching out, a new magazine, *Hi*. We're trying to reach out to the Arab population.

I hope and expect that it will get better. It will get better -- Afghanistan I think starts to make it better. Its people, look what they did last weekend. If we get a good successful election in Iraq and then starts to transition to a fully representative government, I think it will start to get better. And if we can get some traction in the Middle East peace process, it will get better.

What I find is I can go to an Arab country or a country in Europe. You know, I talk to a lot of the young people. I have spent as much time having youth groups around

these -- Barbara can attest -- than older guys that I give speeches to, and they'll talk about all of these issues. I don't know if Barbara was with me when I went to East Berlin -- that's one of my favorite ones -- when I spoke to a kids high school in East Berlin. They all had been reading Michael Moore books, and the most favored author in East Berlin. Thanks guys. Who set this up? (Laughter.) He's telling me as we're driving to the school. I'm saying this is before Michael Moore exploded. These kids all have been reading Michael Moore books.

And we spent 20 minutes on Iraq, the Middle East, and Michael Moore. But then at about minute 25, they started, you know, running out of steam on that and then they wanted to talk about America and they wanted to talk about what it was like for me growing up in America. And suddenly, the whole discussion kind of shifted and became much more conversational and less, you know -- and I find this in almost every place that I go with sometimes high school kids, sometimes college, sometimes adults, young adults. Saudi Arabia is fascinating. (Inaudible) professional people who talked about what's going on inside the kingdom.

And what it tells me is that there is still this enormous reservoir of good feeling for the United States and respect. But because of our position of power in the world, there is also a feeling of resentment.

I think it is very possible, it is still completely in the realm of the possible to touch those emotions of good feeling and respect and recover our position, but it's going to take time, it's going to take more investment on our part. I'd double and triple our programs if I could: More Fulbright scholars; more international visitors' programs; more people coming to this country to go to school and hang out with you; more journalists coming here from around the world. These are enormous payoff programs. More military people coming here to go to our schools. They leave here with more than just an education and I'll tell you a story about this in a minute. They leave with a feeling about America.

I just talked to -- the new Austrian Foreign Minister just was announced today and she'll take over later in the week, so I call her right away. And she said, "I hope you noticed in my CV that I went to Foxcroft." (Laughter). She says, "Some school in Middleburg --"

QUESTION: It ain't the Bronx.

SECRETARY POWELL: -- when I was 15." And she wanted to tell me that right away. Before we talked about anything else, she wanted to tell me that, and the same thing with President Saakashvili of Georgia. He went to school here. So many of them went to school here and that residual feeling is here.

And I'll tell you this story just because I like this story, there's nothing good to be writing about. But I was in Brazil two weeks ago?

MR. BOUCHER: Yeah.

SECRETARY POWELL: Week before last? And we met with 12 kids, 17 and 18. Six of them had been here last year on a program and they came to see me. And this year, six more had come and they saw Rich because I wasn't here, Rich Armitage, my Deputy. But all 12 were out, sitting on the embassy grounds. And I'm sitting there with the Ambassador and we're talking about the program. And they're giving me the usual, "Oh this was, it was a wonderful program. When I grow up I want to be a foreign minister or I want to be an ambassador." High achieving, high SAT score kinds of kids.

And I said, "Fine, but, thank you, I'm glad it was a great program, you learned," and volunteerism touched them. They all couldn't believe the amount of volunteerism that Americans do. But then I said, "Okay, now I'm going to ask you a question, and I want you to think about it. What did you see in America in the week that you were there that was either funny, surprising, shocking, disappointing or saddened you?" And I said, "Let me give you an example." So, and they were all thinking. And I said, "I want it to be really serendipitous," whatever that meant. And I said, "For example, when you visited me, it was in January and it was getting ready to snow. And we had a good meeting, but you all were anxious to finish the meeting so you could get outside and see snow for the first time." And the six that were there started laughing.

And I just waited a moment, and then they started talking. And one kid says, "People laughed at me when I put ketchup on pizza." (Laughter.) "You guys don't put ketchup on your pizza in the United States and they laughed at me," and they all giggled. And another kid said, "What I couldn't understand is we went to have lunch in school and they drink milk with their pizza." And I said, "Time permitting, I'd talk to you about the Dairy Lobby, but that's another issue." (Laughter.)

And so these kinds of silly stories popped up. And then, a young woman said, "I'll tell you a story. We were in a restaurant, a Roy Rogers or something like that or one of those steak things, you know. And 12 of us went in. And we had our dinner, and it was time to pay. And we collected the money and we put the money in, and when we added all the money up, there was only enough money for 10. We didn't know what happened or how we'd miscounted or who didn't pay or what, and everybody said they'd paid. Whatever the cause was, we only had enough money for 10. So we didn't know what we were going to do. We're stuck here -- I think it was outside of Chicago or somewhere, and we don't know how we're going to get out of this."

So they call the waitress over and the waitress came over and they explained the problem to the waitress, and they were terrified, these are 17-year-olds, terrified. And the waitress said, "Oh dear," and she went away. And she came back a few minutes later, having talked to the manager, and she said to them, "It's okay. Don't worry about it. Glad you enjoyed your meal and glad you're here. So don't worry about it."

And they looked at her and said, "But will you have to pay the difference?" And she said, "Oh, no, no, no. Don't worry about it. Just glad you enjoyed it." It astonished them, just astonished them. And it gave them an impression of America that was not the, you know, America that sometimes is caricatured.

So after she told the story and we're all kind of (sniffs), another woman, a young lady about 18 says, "I'll tell you a silly story. I got on the plane from Chicago back to New York and I sat down. And after a moment or two, a woman gets on the plane and she sits next to me. And as soon as she sits down she says, 'Oh, I'm sorry.'" And the young girl looks at her and says, "What for? You're sorry? What for?" And the woman said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I brushed your arm as I sat down. I'm sorry." She was astonished. She had never experienced that kind of sort of courtesy. And it touched her very deeply and it told her a lot about America.

And these kinds of programs that you bring young people here for and you expose them to our country, I've learned over the years it's not the program that really touches them; it's the human exchanges that they have with people. I could tell you story after story of exchanges like this at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the Command & General Staff College, when the foreign students come there, they're married up with a Kansas couple, just average people.

Zia, the former President of Pakistan, was married up with a woman and her husband. Her name was Dolly, Dolly and Ed Gordon; I got to know them many years later. And Zia never forgot the kindness that this mailman and his wife extended to him.

And so that feeling about America is possible to regenerate because we're a pretty good country. We, you know, we get ourselves in Dutch, but it's still a pretty solid place, a pretty good society.

QUESTION: What kind of program --

SECRETARY POWELL: I've got people lined up, you know, with all of the concerns that we have about feelings toward America, I've got people lined up at every consulate throughout the world wanting what? Visas to come here to go to school, to go to our hospitals, to go to Disneyworld or to come here and go to work.

New York is 40 percent immigrant. So there's something that people still admire here that they can't find anywhere else, just like my parents did and your predecessors and ancestors.

QUESTION: Funding for that kind of program has been on the run for a while, long before this Administration.

SECRETARY POWELL: On the run, you mean down or up?

QUESTION: Down.

SECRETARY POWELL: Down? It's going back up now. We've increased it and I want to do more. I would double or triple it. There are, you know, practical constraints as to what I can get out of Congress.

Congress has been enormously supportive of the Department for the three and a half years that we've been here and I'm very, very pleased. We have cleaned up all of the problems that had existed between the Department and Congress. And they would give me more than the President is able to ask for.

Is she still at it?

QUESTION: Can I ask one question? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the official press or government-sponsored press in many of the Arab countries, in some that call themselves allies, like Egypt, often spin wild conspiracy theories about the United States and Israel. What do you say to these countries who are supposedly our allies about their official government press?

SECRETARY POWELL: We take them up on it. We're not always successful. Whenever we spot an official organ that is totally off the farm and off the wall, and spinning conspiracy theories, Richard will go after them, and if it's egregious enough, I'll go after them directly.

I mean, I'm don't want to finger a country, but there is a country that said some things about me and my race I did not take kindly to. This was several years ago. And we let them have it. Some of them actually are -- have free presses, and they're wondering whether this democracy is really as good as we have made it out to be. And I tell them, "You know, free press means you're going to get hammered. And you simply have to accept that as a cost of doing democracy." But when it is a house organ of the government, then we take them on. I don't know if you want to say any more about it, Richard, or not.

MR. BOUCHER: I don't think so. We've -- there are some perennial untruths. We have a disinformation shop that actually follows these things and tries to combat them in the longer term. And then there are some perennial, you know, sort of terrible things that keep coming out: This TV series about, it was "The Horseman", that appeared in Egypt a year ago. You know, we'd seen it before and we knew, heard about it, it keeps popping up, keeps bashing on anybody that has the temerity and --

SECRETARY POWELL: These countries have a long way to go and they're tentative. They're uneasy. This is an interesting observation. Well, actually, it's a truth. Democracies, in a certain way, democracies have greater ability to change and greater ability to control its societies than non-democracies or countries that are far from being democracies because in those societies, there's always a risk of being overthrown, whereas we have a way of dealing with our political problems and dealing with our disagreements through elections.

And so many of these nations that we're trying to get to change and to modernize and to reform themselves have greater difficulty doing it that we would have reforming ourselves because they do not have the political institutions and the traditions of working this all out in an open, democratic process, to include a free press.

There are many, many nations throughout the world that can't tolerate a free press because of the nature of the political system. We can. And we do. And thank God. I think the founding fathers are up there giggling all day long every time someone's getting hammered, "That's the way we wanted it." (Laughter.)

QUESTION: One last one?

SECRETARY POWELL: Barbara.

QUESTION: It's been a long time. (Inaudible.) You're talking about the problems in countries like this. And you talked about Afghanistan, and the President always says freedom is on the march. But in the three very important countries right next to Afghanistan, it seems like things have been going in the opposite direction: Russia. Pakistan -- Musharraf says he's going to keep his general's uniform, probably -- just passed legislation to let that happen. In Iran, the reformers have been chased out of the parliament. It looks like they're going to lose the presidency as well.

So how do you explain -- do you see any connection between the U.S. war on terror and the more authoritarian tendencies we're seeing in some of these places? And what can we do about it without undermining important allies like Musharraf?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think you have to keep engaged with these nations and with the personalities in these nations. And you also have to keep some perspective about where they were and where they are now and where they may be -- where you hope they are heading in the future.

In the case of Pakistan over the last several years, we have seen a parliament start to function again, a prime minister, legislative action reflecting a more effective legislature, not quite what we would have wanted, and we see a nation that is still in danger. I mean Pakistan is in danger. There are people who don't want what Musharraf wants and they don't approve of what Musharraf's been doing. They've tried to kill him twice in the last six or eight months.

And so a little bit of understanding is necessary as you watch somebody like President Musharraf go through this process, as you watch him deal with his economic problems, he has to re-do the madrasa system, fix his educational system, and a relatively free press in Pakistan, yet bombs are going off on a regular basis. We've lost embassy employees and family members in Pakistan, as you know.

And so this is not to excuse, but this is to say, if the trend is in the right direction and moving in the right direction, where we think they should have moved quicker on something, then let's talk about it and let's engage them and let them know what we think would be best for them. But at the same time, we have to be mindful of the historical change they're going through.

In the case of Russia, I think this is a case where the Russian people came out of the post-Soviet Union era in a state of total chaos -- a great deal of freedom, but it was freedom to steal from the state and President Putin took over and restored a sense of order in the country and moved in a democratic way.

And the Russian people are enormously supportive of his efforts. We have expressed our concerns about some of the actions he's taken with respect to the election of governors, the ability of a free press to operate, some of the aspects of his election and the election of the Duma. And so he has heard us. It's not as if we are being silent. But at the same time, he has to make his judgment as to what his people want and how to move.

I do not see Russia sliding back down into the abyss of the Soviet Union. But they may not be moving as quickly or in as steadied a manner as we might like to see toward all (inaudible) of democracy, but I think they are still moving in the correct direction.

QUESTION: (Inaudible).

QUESTION: How much damage, specifically, do you think Abu Ghraib did in the Muslim world?

SECRETARY POWELL: It was a bit hit. I was a tragedy for us. This is not expected of America. It never was. And it hurt us very badly among those who were willing to give us the benefit of the doubt on those things and said, "My God." It was a big, big hit.

And I had to go to the World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea a few months after and talk to all the Arab leaders that were there and all the Arab intellectuals who were there. And what I said to them is that this is inexcusable. It's not consistent with our value system. And I speak as a soldier who carried that value system for 35 years. These are my, my kids. And it was wrong, and there's nothing else to be said about it. It was wrong, and they'll be punished. And then I said to them, "Watch how a responsible, democratic nation deals with such a matter; it isn't swept under the rug, it isn't ignored. A free press will let it all be put out there."

Now multiple investigations are underway to find those responsible and accountable to make sure that justice is served, to make sure that nothing like this happens again.

QUESTION: We now see signs of similar problems at Guantanamo, as well as some evidence that people who were released from Guantanamo have gone on to be a problem. What's your reaction?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, Guantanamo had some -- I'm not, I wouldn't put, I won't accept, yet, the premise that Guantanamo is like Abu Ghraib. I think we're still, and I've read reports about it, but we'll just have to wait and see how that unfolds. But I don't want to accept the characterization of Guantanamo as another Abu Ghraib.

There are a lot of people in Guantanamo who have been -- were in Guantanamo, who have been released once they had a chance to examine who they are. There are a lot of very bad people in Guantanamo, and many of them simply can't let loose. They'd made it clear what they would do. And as you pointed out, some who have been let loose we thought, "Okay, we really don't have a reason to hold these folks, but we're a little nervous about it. And lo, and behold, a number of them have gone right back to what they were doing, and they're putting us at risk and putting Afghans at risk, putting, you know, the progress in Afghanistan at risk.

And so we have to be careful as we work through this population in Guantanamo to make sure we not only get whatever intelligence information they may have about threats to us as a nation and to our interests, but who are we letting back on the street, and do we have confidence that we won't face this guy on another battlefield in two week's time, three week's time?

QUESTION: Are you confident that what went on at Guantanamo is not a match for Abu Ghraib?

SECRETARY POWELL: I have no reason to believe it is, but I am not -- I don't, I've never, I haven't been to Guantanamo. And I'd have to ask you to direct that question to those who know more about it.

I have seen reports of alleged abuse, but I've seen nothing in my formal channels to suggest that one can make a comparison between Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib.

QUESTION: Well, talking about prisoners, have interrogations of Saddam given any indication why he acted the way he did?

SECRETARY POWELL: Nothing that I've seen from those interrogations. He's gotten very, you know, closed and protected in his comments. But I haven't been exposed to all of it and I'm not a psychiatrist.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Let me ask one quick one, Richard.

Owen sort of touched on this earlier, but just to ask you directly. The central plank of Senator Kerry's policy for Iraq would be to have some sort of international meeting and thereby dramatically enlarge the coalition that's there. Do you think that's feasible?

SECRETARY POWELL: One can -- I mean, we meet on a regular basis in international fora on Iraq. At the UN, UNGA meeting in late September, I met with the G-8. I met with the EU, 25 nations and me in a single room. I meet with them in so many different ways. We're scheduling a meeting now next month in Cairo with the Iraqi Interim Government, the G-8 foreign ministers, and all of the neighbors of Iraq, to include Iran and Syria, where we will talk about this.

I'm not sure how much broader an international conference others may be talking about, the suggestion being that if only there was an international conference, then perhaps the French and Germans would send troops. Really? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: The suggestion is that if there were a different president, they would be willing to send troops.

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't do politics. (Laughter.) Nice try, Barbara.

QUESTION: Thank you.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you. Thank you very much.
2004/1128

Released on October 19, 2004

