



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Interview by Sir David Frost of BBC

Secretary Colin L. Powell

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SIR DAVID FROST: Mr. Secretary, Saddam Hussein no longer rules Iraq. It must, for you, be a dream, a hope that you've cherished for the past 12 years.

SECRETARY POWELL: We have all hoped that Saddam Hussein would leave the scene. He terrorized his nation for several decades. He threatened his neighbors. He tortured people. He developed weapons of mass destruction. He was a source of instability in the region.

In the Gulf War, we kicked him out of Kuwait -- which was our mission -- contained him, and hoped that he would depart from the scene. But he didn't, and he continued to do those things which are absolutely reprehensible.

And so, finally, we took the case back to the United Nations last fall, got a solid resolution, 1441, which gave legitimacy to the use of military force if he didn't comply with his many obligations over a period of ten years. He didn't comply with those obligations, force was used, and now his regime is no longer.

SIR DAVID FROST: And what was the worst and best moment of this particular campaign? There was concern towards the end of the first week, which now looks exaggerated, but people were concerned about supply lines and Iraqis not coming out in our support and all of that sort of thing. And was that the worst moment of these last three weeks?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think it was a tricky moment. I never saw it as the worst moment. I think the best moment was when the statue came down, and that will be in our memories forever.

At the end of the first week there was a lot of chatter about the plan wasn't going well, but if one stood back and didn't listen to the chatter or watch all of the experts on television, you could see what was happening. There was no organized resistance. There were pockets of resistance and there was still Baghdad to be dealt with, but there wasn't a front line of Iraqi troops.

And General Franks and his commanders were very, very agile and nimble in responding to the threats to the rear area, threats to their line of supply, fedayeen coming in, and they dealt with all that in a very, very superb way. And slowly but surely, they isolated these pockets of resistance and brought the whole thing down in three weeks.

SIR DAVID FROST: And so with it brought down in three weeks, I mean, all that advance criticism before it actually happened, and the million people demonstrating in London and so on and so forth, do you feel a sense of vindication this morning?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we should feel a sense of vindication. We should feel that we were right. The President was right, Prime Minister Blair and so many other world leaders were right, that even in the face of protests and demonstrations, we knew that this was a regime that had to be dealt with because of its failure to comply with international obligations.

And so it showed that the President's leadership was key in all of that and Prime Minister Blair's leadership was key. And even in the face of those protests and even in the absence of what some people thought they needed in the form of a second UN resolution, strong leaders committed to principle and doing the right thing were able to take us

through this and come out the other side, with this regime gone and hope for the people of Iraq now in place.

And the people of Iraq are going to be better off. They will be under a democratic form of government and we will help bring that democratic form of government into being.

SIR DAVID FROST: How important is it that we discover -- I mean, there's been no definitive findings reported. How important is it that we do discover weapons of mass destruction? Would it be embarrassing if we didn't?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, we will find weapons of mass destruction. For the last three weeks we've been fighting battles, and once this combat period is over we can then turn our attention to finding the weapons of mass destruction. And I think they will be found. That was the basis upon which we went in, and I think there is strong evidence. There's no question about the fact that there are weapons of mass destruction, and they will be looking for them.

SIR DAVID FROST: And if there are, they would tend to be likely to be chemical and biological, rather than nuclear, wouldn't they?

SECRETARY POWELL: There is, I think, a higher likelihood of there being chemical and biological weaponry. The nuclear program we also think is there, but we don't think it was as advanced as, perhaps, their chemical and biological weapons programs were.

SIR DAVID FROST: Have we learned anything significant about the possible links between al-Qaida and Iraq?

SECRETARY POWELL: Not so far because of --

SIR DAVID FROST: As you --

SECRETARY POWELL: -- what we've been watching is ground -- we've been watching an air-land battle for the last three weeks. But I think as we capture people, as people turn themselves in, as we get into records, and as we're able to interview people, I think we will learn a lot more about what Iraq has been doing for these many years, and I think we will learn a lot more about how they have been supporting terrorism. And I would not be at all surprised if we find a lot more with respect to their links with different terrorist organizations, as well as al-Qaida.

SIR DAVID FROST: When we talked in a memorable conversation last September, you estimated that you thought that the Iraqis had about -- the Iraqi army had about a third the strength or capability that they did at the time of the Gulf War. Were you right or wrong? You were right, or were you too high, too low?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think it was about right, and I think Franks would say the same thing, that this was not the Iraqi army of 1990. This was an Iraqi army that was smaller, much less capability, and for a period of ten years with the sanctions regime in place, was not able to rebuild its capability.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't underestimate this army. It was formidable. It had weapons. It had surface-to-surface missiles. It had tanks. And it had to be defeated in the field. And the coalition forces, I think, did a brilliant job of doing that.

SIR DAVID FROST: And in terms of what they did and didn't do, I mean, the Stalingrad images of people didn't -- turned out just not to be true.

SECRETARY POWELL: Turned out not to be true, and we're all pleased about that. And command and control seemed to have broken down early on, so that we were fighting pockets of resistance, but by the end of the first week it was becoming clear that the regime was losing control.

We can't tell if that reflected the, you know, the demise of Saddam Hussein. We don't know if he's alive or dead. We really don't know enough yet about the command and control system to understand why it started to break down so quickly.

But certainly, by the third week of the war it was obvious that we were fighting pockets and units were anxious to give up, and central command and control of the whole thing was no longer there.

SIR DAVID FROST: And the coalition obviously stated at the beginning that it was going to do its best to minimize civilian deaths, and it certainly tried to do that. But did it do it better or worse than you feared? Were there more or less civilian deaths than you hoped?

SECRETARY POWELL: We really don't know how many civilian deaths there have been and we don't know how many of them can be attributed to coalition action, as opposed to action on the part of Iraqi armed forces as they defended themselves. But I don't think we could have done more to minimize civilian casualties or destruction of property.

I remember on one of the early nights of the war when there was a massive strike against Baghdad, and people were calling me, various foreign ministers were calling me saying, "You're destroying Baghdad." I said, "Not at all. It may look like it, but these are very surgically directed strikes."

And the next day, you could see that. The city was intact. Buildings had been destroyed, facilities had been taken out, command centers had been destroyed, but the people were going about their business. They never stopped using busses. They never stopped using taxis. It wasn't like London in the days of the Blitz where everybody went into the basement and hid. They knew that the Americans were going after selected targets and not targeting the general population.

And, in some instances, this actually caused us to accept a higher level of risk toward our young men and women because we wouldn't use overwhelming force if it could be avoided on a particular target in order to avoid collateral damage or the loss of innocent life.

SIR DAVID FROST: Right, yes, because we didn't want to destroy things that we were going to need when we tried to rebuild Iraq. But I mean, the figure, the Iraqi figure, on civilian deaths, only to April the 3rd admittedly, but was, relatively speaking, if you can say low about fatalities at all, a relatively low figure: 1,254.

SECRETARY POWELL: That was the Iraqi estimate. And for a conflict of this sort, I would say that's relatively low. But any loss of life is to be regretted, especially if it's innocent loss of life, civilians. We try to avoid that. That's not our style of war. It's not our way of making war. And we did everything we could to avoid any loss of civilian life, but certainly there was some.

SIR DAVID FROST: Can we have closure of this war without finding out what happened, or finding or capturing or killing Saddam Hussein?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes. I mean, this campaign, this operation, will come to a successful end when there is a new government in Iraq that has been decided upon by the people of Iraq, not imposed by the outside forces or the coalition. And when the people of Iraq have foresworn any support of terrorism, when there are no more weapons of mass destruction, and when they are committed to using the wealth of Iraq for the benefit of the people of Iraq, and not to develop weapons or to threaten neighbors, then we will have closure, with or without Saddam Hussein.

Sure, we would like to know exactly what happened to him, but he is no longer in charge of anything. If he is alive he is not going to show his face, and if he is dead we may never know.

SIR DAVID FROST: But he might melt away, as Usama bin Laden seems to have done.

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't think that Saddam Hussein has any control any longer, and he will not be pulling any strings. As you saw the people of Baghdad and the other cities respond to the coalition forces, they're glad he's gone. They were the ones pulling down the statues of Saddam Hussein and tearing up his portrait. And so I don't think he has any further control over the emotions of the people of Iraq.

SIR DAVID FROST: Would we like to see Nuremberg trials for war crimes or for crimes against humanity, either the 55 generals or other people?

SECRETARY POWELL: We believe all of those who are responsible for crimes against humanity and crimes against their own people should be brought to justice. And in the first instance, hopefully we can put in place a government in Iraq so that they can bring their own people to justice, and that would be our preference.

SIR DAVID FROST: And do you think, looking back, I mean, as some people in Europe have suggested, the fact of the way that the French and the Germans, and to a lesser extent the Russians, held up proceedings at the UN contributed to the need for war, sustained Saddam Hussein a bit?

SECRETARY POWELL: There is no doubt that after 1441 passed -- that was the major resolution that passed unanimously 15 to 0 that said he is in violation of his obligation and, if he didn't comply now, there would be serious consequences -- that was a strong, powerful message to Saddam Hussein. And I believe if we could have kept that unanimity within the Council so that we gave a strong, powerful message to him every step along the way, things might have turned in a different direction.

But once it became clear that some members of the Council would never impose serious consequences onto Saddam Hussein in any reasonable period of time -- France especially, Germany and Russia as well, but Germany said under no circumstances did they think they could support the use of force -- certainly that gave Saddam Hussein some comfort because he could see the disunity within the Council.

Having said that, the coalition was able to come together, a willing coalition of nations now numbering some 49 nations that have been publicly identified with the coalition, and using the authority of UN resolutions, 1441 and earlier resolutions 678 and 687, they had the authority to do what needed to be done, and it's been done very well.

SIR DAVID FROST: And that leads us on to the question of the role of the UN in the future. And Jacques Chirac said earlier this week, and seems to have repeated roughly the same thing in St. Petersburg, he said, "We are no longer in an era where one or two countries control the fate of another country, therefore the political, economic, humanitarian and administrative reconstruction of Iraq is a matter for the United Nations alone."

SECRETARY POWELL: The United Nations has a role --

SIR DAVID FROST: You did not agree?

SECRETARY POWELL: No. The United Nations has a role to play. The President and Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Aznar -- President Aznar -- and Prime Minister Berlusconi have been united in this one. And as you go to the Azores summit, where Mr. Aznar and Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush were together, they said so in a joint statement. And the President has repeated it. As recently as last week in Belfast, he said that the United Nations would have a vital role to play -- humanitarian --

SIR DAVID FROST: And that is humanitarian and suggesting names for the cabinet.

SECRETARY POWELL: -- and suggesting names. So the United Nations will have a role to play. The United States is not mad at the United Nations. We believe they have a role to play.

But, at the same time, it was this coalition of nations that was willing to put its treasure at risk, take the political risk, and put its sons and daughters at risk, and lost lives in the pursuit of this campaign and the execution of this campaign. And we are committed to making sure that the Iraqi people have a democratic form of government, and we believe we have a leading role to play in bringing this about.

So if "central role" of the UN means that as soon as hostilities are over that the coalition members just please go away and don't bother any more, and someone else in the form of the United Nations or the Security Council will take over everything and have the only role to play, that's not acceptable to us.

And furthermore, the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has not expressed an interest in playing that role, nor does he seem to think that's the proper role for the United Nations.

SIR DAVID FROST: So the --

SECRETARY POWELL: David, this need not be a huge fight. The United States and the United Kingdom and --

SIR DAVID FROST: As long as they give in --

SECRETARY POWELL: No, as long as we all approach this in the spirit of trying to help the Iraqi people, not a fight to be had among Perm 5 members or among Security Council members; if we all approach this not as a confrontation, but as an opportunity to help the Iraqi people. That should be our single goal: to help the Iraqi people rebuild their nation after two-plus decades of destructive behavior on the part of a dictator. As long as we want to bring humanitarian supplies to the Iraqi people and as long as we want to help build a stable government that is founded on democratic principles that will live in peace with its neighbors, we can find a way to resolve whatever differences exist in the United Nations.

SIR DAVID FROST: Basically, what you're saying is that we do not -- the coalition, at the moment, the United States, does not, at the moment, see a political role, at least in the first few months; no political role for the UN?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I don't know what you mean by "no political role." The President said at his press conference with Prime Minister Blair last week that hopefully the United Nations, through the Secretary General, might make some suggestions with respect to who might participate in an interim authority. We are going to --

SIR DAVID FROST: But not decisions, not decisions, at least --

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I think the decisions ultimately have to be made by the Iraqi people, not even the coalition. Our whole goal, singular goal, most important goal, is to now bring together leaders in Iraq and Iraqi leaders outside of Iraq who will be returning -- the external opposition who have struggled so hard for so many years to bring about this day --

SIR DAVID FROST: You've got a meeting on Tuesday, right, in Nasiriya?

SECRETARY POWELL: We're beginning this process on Tuesday in Nasiriya, where General Franks, with the coordination and, of course, the concurrence of everybody back here in Washington, has invited Iraqi leaders to assemble, you know, from that part of Iraq, and begin discussions as to who should be represented in an interim authority.

As other parts of the country are secured, we will have other meetings in other parts of the country, slowly building an interim authority that will have legitimacy, legitimacy given to it, first and foremost, by the Iraqi people who will be assembled in these meetings, and then ultimately, legitimacy that I am quite sure will be conferred by the United Nations in due course through an endorsement of the Iraqi authority.

SIR DAVID FROST: The UN won't be there at Nasiriya on Tuesday?

SECRETARY POWELL: Not in this instance because it is -- the Secretary General does not yet believe he has a mandate for this. But I think in due course the United Nations will play a role. In due course we want this interim authority and we want the Iraqi government that arises from this embryo of an interim authority to be recognized in the international community, which means being recognized by the United Nations.

So we're not fighting the United Nations. We will be going through the United Nations for it to play its vital role in due course and with various resolutions as we move forward.

SIR DAVID FROST: But at the beginning, in the period leading up to the IIA, obviously you want to be there without the UN and without France interfering in the search for the weapons of mass destruction because you could argue that they have vested interests in them not being found. I mean, you don't want them there at that time.

SECRETARY POWELL: We don't feel a need right now to consult with respect to the weapons of mass destruction because the campaign is still underway. When General Franks has said that hostilities are over, made that

recommendation to the President, and when the country has been secured and the situation stabilized, then we will turn our attention to the search for weapons of mass destruction. And the United States and its coalition partners, the United Kingdom and other nations -- there are now some five nations in Iraq now as part of the coalition right in Iraq -- then we will turn our attention to looking for these weapons of mass destruction and we will see what assistance can be provided in this effort.

SIR DAVID FROST: That's right, though you wouldn't probably want France, Germany or Russia as part of that.

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, it's not a role for France, Germany and Russia. I mean, we will be the liberating authority. We will have occupational responsibilities. But it's -- I don't want to quite couch it that way because what we want to do is find these weapons of mass destruction and make sure that the whole world sees them and understands the nature of this regime. And we will want these weapons of mass destruction and the infrastructure associated with it seen by the whole world and verified by the whole world.

So it's not a matter of keeping anybody out; it's a matter of first things first, and right now the responsibilities for completing this campaign and securing the population, stabilizing the situation, is in the hands of General Tommy Franks and his coalition commanders.

SIR DAVID FROST: But would it be fair to say that it may be some time before President Chirac gets an invitation to Crawford?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I don't handle Crawford invitations. We are not at war with France. We have had a very serious disagreement over this issue. And I remain in touch with my French counterpart, my German counterpart, my Russian counterpart, and we will find ways to bridge the differences that have emerged in recent months.

SIR DAVID FROST: Mr. Chalabi is going to be at the session on Tuesday, and so on. Is he officially the U.S. nomination or is he absolutely just one of many?

SECRETARY POWELL: The individuals who will be there on Tuesday are being invited by General Franks -- I don't know who they all are yet -- and we are consulting with General Franks on who should be invited and who will be attending. But the United States has not anointed anyone to be the future leader of Iraq or to be the leader of the IIA, the interim Iraqi authority. We believe very strongly that the Iraqi people and representatives of the Iraqi people, in the first instance, are the ones who should do that. The President has made it very clear that we are not in the business of installing the next president of Iraq.

SIR DAVID FROST: What about the news, the headlines of the last couple of days, about the looting and so on, and disorder or chaos, some people say, in the major cities in Iraq? There are reports today that things are going better in Basra, and so on. But do you think they can be got better across Iraq, or is Iraq in danger of being ungovernable?

SECRETARY POWELL: No, if you look at similar situations in the past, and you can even look at situations in America, if you look at the riots we had in Watts back in '65 or after Dr. King was killed in '68, when you go through a period such as this where order breaks down because the civil administration has failed, and in the case of Iraq the Ba'ath Party leadership is gone, there tends to be a period of chaos, rioting, looting. It tends to burn itself out over time as order is restored and as people say, "Enough."

I think that this is an unfortunate by-product of a campaign of this nature, but I think order will be restored. And I know that General Franks, as he finishes the military part of this, the hostilities part of this, will devote more and more of his attention to making sure that order is restored. We're sending in police advisors to help recreate a police force.

SIR DAVID FROST: How many of those? 1,200, isn't it?

SECRETARY POWELL: 1,200, yeah. Now, we're not going to become the police force, but we can provide assistance in creating a new police force once we get rid of this awful leadership that was provided by the Ba'ath Party, make sure the cancer has been cut out, then we can be in the process of rebuilding.

And as you know, retired General Jay Garner is heading our Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs, and he is going in with a team of very, very, very capable military personnel, civilian personnel, a number of members of the State Department, the Agency for International Development -- a team of experts that will go in and try to rebuild each of these ministries of government and make sure that we are helping the Iraqi people put in place a new government of the kind that I've described.

(Brief recess.)

SIR DAVID FROST: Yes, perhaps the most sort of worrying part of all that looting and so on was not so much the looting of former officials, because that's an understandable form of revenge and so on, the banks more difficult, but the fact that the Red Cross say the medical system's almost collapsed. I mean, the fact that looting extended to the medical system and hospitals, that's the sort of oddest part, really.

SECRETARY POWELL: That is troubling. One expects looting of the regime, and it once again shows you what the people thought about the regime. Now, they're free to express their views, even violently express their views, but we are concerned about the looting in hospitals and ICRC facilities. I think that's coming under control now.

And Secretary Rumsfeld, when I spoke to him earlier today, he is making a concerted effort to bring in surgical kits and to bring in replenishment supplies, tons and tons of medical supplies, so that we can get these hospitals reequipped and up and running.

SIR DAVID FROST: I know that you and he get along very well. I don't fully understand this thing that there's apparently a great contest or debate between the Powell Doctrine and the Rumsfeld Doctrine.

SECRETARY POWELL: Mm-hmm.

SIR DAVID FROST: What's the difference?

SECRETARY POWELL: I really am not quite sure. You know, a military plan is based on the enemy that you're facing, the circumstances you're facing, the political objective you're trying to achieve. And the way in which Don Rumsfeld and General Myers, our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Tommy Franks, the commander in the field, and British coalition commanders and other coalition commanders handled this was absolutely superb; and I fully supported it and am proud of the way in which they did it. And so one can call it what one wants, as long as it works. And in this case, it worked great.

SIR DAVID FROST: But you're a touch more multilateral and he's a touch more unilateral?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't know that I would quite put it that way. I mean, when we went to the UN last year, notwithstanding all the debating and notwithstanding all the speculation in the press, all of us agreed. We all talked about it. And at the key meeting that we held, Don, Vice President Cheney, myself, Condi Rice and the President all agreed that going to the UN was the correct thing to do; it was a UN problem, let's take it to the UN.

But we also agreed that when we went to the UN that it had to be with the understanding that if the UN did not act, then we were prepared to act either with UN authority or with a willing coalition. We were all unified in that regard.

SIR DAVID FROST: And talking about the UN, as we have been, the events since last September through to today, I mean, most people would say that obviously the UN has been weakened by what's gone on, maybe seriously. But seriously weakened? I mean, that's inevitable, I suppose, because of what happened.

SECRETARY POWELL: I think it has been weakened. I don't think we should deny this, sort of soft-pedal it.

The UN was presented with a challenge by the President last September, and the challenge was simple: For 12 years you have issued instructions to Saddam Hussein via resolutions to get rid of his weapons of mass destruction, to comply, and he has ignored those instructions; so you have one last chance to give him one last chance, and if he doesn't take this last chance, you have to impose your will.

The UN and Security Council understood that. They passed the resolution, 1441, unanimously. But then it got strung out because people thought, well, let's just keep inspecting, let's add more inspectors, let's have a longer inspection period. And they wouldn't face the simple, simple fact that Saddam Hussein was not complying and he was using extended inspections in order to drag it out, and hopefully interest would fade.

That, I believe, was a failure on the part of the Security Council. And at that point, we believed we had more than enough authority from 1441 that a willing coalition could take action.

SIR DAVID FROST: And so, I mean, would you think that the UN should stay weakened, which would be welcome to some people in Washington, or would you like to strengthen it again?

SECRETARY POWELL: I want to see the UN as a strengthened institution. The UN is our international institution; 191 nations belong to the United Nations and the United Nations does important work around the world.

The United States has expressed its support for the United Nations in recent years. We have paid our arrears. We have, as you know, rejoined UNESCO. We support international organizations financially. We participate in them fully.

So we want to see a vibrant UN, but the UN has to meet its responsibilities, however distasteful sometimes meeting those responsibilities are, such as imposing serious consequences, the use of force, over a nation such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

SIR DAVID FROST: We seem to have had reasons to get more concerned about Syria. Some people have said that they may be hiding weapons of mass destruction. Others say they may be hiding members of Saddam's family. Syria is a real concern at the moment, isn't it?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, Syria has been a concern for a long period of time. We have designated Syria for years as a state that sponsors terrorism and we have discussed this with the Syrians on many occasions. We know that they have been interested in weapons of mass destruction and we are concerned that materials have flowed through Syria to the Iraqi regime over the years, and we have called this to the Syrians' attention.

And now that the regime is gone in Baghdad, we hope that Syria will understand there is an opportunity for a better way for them if they would stop supporting terrorist activities and make sure that they are not a source of weaponry of mass destruction, weapons of mass destruction, for terrorist organizations or anyone else.

And so we are making this point clearly and in a very direct manner to the Syrians, and we hope the Syrians will respond accordingly. Also, we think it would be very unwise, and wouldn't be consistent with what I just said, if suddenly Syria becomes a haven for all these people who should be brought to justice who are trying to get out of Baghdad.

SIR DAVID FROST: They should be returned?

SECRETARY POWELL: It seems to me that Syria would not find it in its interest, nor do I know why Syria would become a place of haven for people who should be subject to the justice of the Iraqi people.

SIR DAVID FROST: And so your message to Syria and to anyone else who is considering a similar policy towards people fleeing from Saddam's Iraq who were leaders of Iraq, your message to them this morning would be what?

SECRETARY POWELL: Would be to not give them haven, to detain them and be prepared to turn them over when people are ready to subject them to justice and to bring charges against them, but not be seen as a place of haven or safety for these individuals.

SIR DAVID FROST: And in terms of -- in addition to Syria, your other worries at the moment would be North Korea, who have weapons of mass destruction, and Iran.

SECRETARY POWELL: We have been worried about Iran and North Korea, and of course with have discussed them in the context of an expression the President used, which is the "axis of evil" nations, who have systems that are certainly not friendly to democratic principles, who have supported terrorist activities over the years, and who have been developing and may even possess weapons of mass destruction.

And particularly in the post-9/11 period where there is the possibility of weapons of mass destruction getting into the hands of terrorists, I think it is important for the whole world to come together and say to these nations, "You have to move away from this past, you have to move away from the support of terrorist activity, and there is no utility for you, no political use, no political utility, in developing weapons of mass destruction; and, frankly, a better world and a better life awaits you as nations and awaits your people if you would move in a new direction."

And one of the good things that will come out of what's happened in Iraq is that Iraq can become an example, not an example to be necessarily imposed on anyone else, but an example of a nation that can now use its treasure to develop an economic system, an economic system and a political system, that will make them welcomed into the family of nations, can become a responsible player in the region, can help its people; schools can be built, hospitals can be built, communities can be built, people can express their views openly in a democratic system. This will be an example to the region and to the world.

SIR DAVID FROST: One final question. The media have been rating you for the last three weeks. How do you rate them?

SECRETARY POWELL: How do I rate the media?

SIR DAVID FROST: The media.

SECRETARY POWELL: The media. Well, I think the media, frankly, has done a pretty good job of covering the war. People watching television and reading papers have to learn, though, to take a step back. They are not necessarily seeing the whole picture every time they see a breathless reporter out in front of a tank or every time one of the retired generals on television, all of whom worked for me at one time or another, are opining on what's going on.

Combat tends to be a confused thing, especially ground combat, and you have to sort of wait and see the whole picture. And, on balance, when you put all of those pictures together over the last three weeks, I think the media has done a pretty good job of showing the people of the world how this campaign unfolded. And whether I like it or not, whether I approve of it or not, this is what a free press and a free media are all about.

I don't worry about media criticism or commentary very much because I believe that the American people -- and I certainly believe that the people of the United Kingdom as well -- are sensible enough to lean back, watch, and make their own judgments based on all the information they've received. They have good, common sense, and I trust the people.

SIR DAVID FROST: Well, thank you so much, Mr. Secretary, once again. We thank you. And I sort of gather that you think winning the peace may be almost more difficult than winning the war.

SECRETARY POWELL: Winning the peace will be difficult, but it's a welcome challenge and it's a challenge we will meet. We are doing this for the Iraqi people, we are doing it for the region, we are doing it for the promise of the 21st century and a better world.

And we want to turn our agenda from war to going after HIV/AIDS, to economic development, to development assistance for people in need. The President has a powerful agenda that he will be pursuing. He has added \$5 billion a year to our development budget for nations in need that are committed to democracy, \$15 billion for HIV/AIDS. We have got a powerful agenda and we will now be turning our attention to that.

SIR DAVID FROST: Mr. Secretary, as ever, thank you very much.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you, Sir David.

[End]

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