



# U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

<a href="#">About the State Dept.</a>	<a href="#">Press and Public Affairs</a>	<a href="#">Travel and Living Abroad</a>	<a href="#">Countries and Regions</a>	<a href="#">International Issues</a>	<a href="#">History, Education and Culture</a>	<a href="#">Business Center</a>	<a href="#">Other Services</a>	<a href="#">Employment</a>
---------------------------------------	--	--	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------

[\[Print Friendly Version\]](#)

## Interview on CNN's Larry King Live

### Secretary Colin L. Powell

Pretoria, South Africa

July 10, 2003

**MR. KING:** Good evening and welcome to a very special edition of Larry King Live. Later, Bob Woodward will join us. We begin in Pretoria, South Africa with Secretary of State Colin Powell. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, for giving us this time. Why Africa? Why now?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Because Africa is an important continent with many important countries and because the President from the very beginning of the Administration wanted to make sure that Africa enjoyed a priority. He followed through on the instructions that he gave to me and Dr. Rice and all of the members of the foreign affairs team to make sure that we had programs that supported African ambitions, the desire of the African people to lead better lives. So, we have expanded the African Growth and Opportunity Act. We have done the Millennium Challenge Account, which is going to make a major difference here in Africa by providing more money for aid. We have invested enormously. The President made a major investment in the campaign against HIV/AIDS with his Global Fund – the support to the Global Fund, as well as the new Emergency Fund that he has created. Africa is a continent of great importance to us and it has problems that we want to help African nations solve. And he particularly wants to help those nations who have made a commitment to democracy, a commitment to the free enterprise system.

**MR. KING:** Mr. Secretary, is this a new emphasis, or is this the George Bush you always knew?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It is the George Bush that I met during the campaign season. It is the George Bush I talked about issues with during the transition. From the very beginning he made it clear that Africa and other parts of the world that are undeveloped and in need of American assistance would receive that assistance. His visit here is for the purpose of demonstrating his commitment.

**MR. KING:** How bad is the AIDS crisis?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The HIV/AIDS crisis is bad -- it is a pandemic. It is a weapon of mass destruction. Millions and millions of people are at risk and it is not just a human issue, it is a political issue. It is the destruction of societies, the destruction of countries, the destruction of hope for a better life. It is something that we must all come together to fight. I think the United States has been in the forefront of leading this effort and we will continue to do so. The President has a passion for this issue and he has been demonstrating that passion throughout this week in his visit to Senegal and South Africa and to Botswana and will do it tomorrow when we go to Uganda, then on to Nigeria.

**MR. KING:** Is the money that he talked about, is that committed? Is that a done deal?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we are working with the Congress to get the funding and we hope that the Congress will support the President's request. We already had a large number of bilateral programs, so we were spending billions and billions of dollars already. But the President recognized that the need was so great that we really had to ratchet up our level of spending. That's why he asked the American people to share our wealth, share the benefits that we enjoy in our country with others around the world who are in need, especially those who are suffering from the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. And I'm confident and hopeful that the Congress will provide the funding. I know the American people support this issue and I hope that Congress has no hesitation about giving full funding to this program.

**MR. KING:** Concerning Liberia, Mr. Secretary, yesterday the President said that the United States will be involved in Liberia. Can you elaborate on that?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes. We are working with ECOWAS and we are working with the United Nations. I have talked to Kofi Annan almost every day in the past week and ECOWAS is taking the lead. These are the African nations that are willing to put troops on the ground to assist in the departure of President Taylor. Nigeria has offered him a place to go. Nigeria has offered troops; other nations have offered troops. But they will need some assistance in getting to Monrovia and in supporting themselves once in Monrovia. The United States will have a role to play. We will participate in that effort. We are sending a team from the Pentagon to Accra in Ghana this weekend to discuss with ECOWAS their needs and to see whether or not a U.S. presence is also required. So the President has indicated a willingness to support and participate in this effort.

**MR. KING:** Do you envision American troops going there?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It's a possibility. We are looking at all of the options but we want to examine this very, very carefully. We believe that ECOWAS and the United Nations have to be in the lead. The United Nations has to put in place the political process that will bring in a new government. And we will wait to see what our assessment team finds out during their deliberations over the weekend. Then I expect the President to make a decision in the not-too-distant future about the support we will be providing and what level of participation is required.

**MR. KING:** But there is no question that the United States has to be in some way involved?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The President has made it clear that we are prepared to participate but exactly what that participation will involve is what we are looking at right now, Larry.

**MR. KING:** And what about the call for the change in government in Zimbabwe, why?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, what we have said with respect to Zimbabwe is that President Mugabe has practiced very flawed economic policies, put in place flawed economic policies, and we have a flawed political system where the opposition isn't allowed to participate fully in the political process of the country. It is a country that used to be an exporter of food. It is a country that is in very great distress right now and so we believe that President Mugabe should openly discuss these issues with the opposition, let them participate and find a political solution to this crisis so that Zimbabwe does not become the destabilizing element throughout the region. That is the same position that President Mbeki has taken with President Bush yesterday at the press conference as you saw, Larry. And we will continue to speak out very sharply and clearly about this issue.

**MR. KING:** Do you frankly expect him to go?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I can't say that now. We will have to see what happens. There are a number of nations that are working on this issue. President Mbeki is working on it, we are working on it, the United Nations is working on it. We also have a humanitarian problem in Zimbabwe. They are in desperate need of food and we are trying to do everything we can with respect to alleviating the conditions of famine that exist in the country as well. But I can't tell you right now how it will be resolved politically. But there is a desperate need for the government to speak openly and honestly and have open negotiations with the opposition.

**MR. KING:** Are you satisfied personally and as Secretary of State with the President's speech about slavery?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I think he gave a very powerful statement in Senegal at Goree Island. I think we recognize what history was represented at that terrible site. He has spoken every day since about looking at that last doorway going out to where the ships would load the slaves. He also spoke about the triumph of the human spirit, how these people could come to the United States, be sent into slavery, families broken up, and yet what was not destroyed was the human spirit, the desire to do something with one's life and how in our country in the United States of America, we had slavery and we had to fight a great war to end slavery. And even after that war, it took another hundred years before we could see the equality that we enjoy in our society now. The President also recognizes that we have much more to do in our society to remove the last vestiges of that horrible past. So, I think he gave a powerful statement that talked about the past and also talks about the future.

**MR. KING:** Some in the United States felt he should have apologized. Should he have?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No, I don't think there was a necessity for the United States to apologize. The United States, when we came to being as a nation, slavery was there. It took us a while to recognize that we could not live our Constitution truly unless we eliminated slavery and hundreds of thousands of young men fought a Civil War to end slavery. Then it took us a long time to get rid of the vestiges of slavery and we are still working on it to this very day. So the very fact that we have come this far and we are working so hard, that shows that we think about slavery. That shows I think what America has done to put this issue into the past and look to the future. But I don't know if it was necessary for a President of the United States to come here and apologize for the sins of those who were responsible for slavery so many hundreds of years ago.

**MR. KING:** We'll be back with some more moments with the Secretary of State Colin Powell. He is in Pretoria, South Africa, accompanying the President on this historic tour.

(Commercial break)

**MR. KING:** We are back with Secretary of State Colin Powell in Africa with the President of the United States.

What is your thinking and thoughts on this furor over the President's admitted misstatement about the uranium purchases in Africa by Iraq in the State of the Union address?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Quite frankly Larry, I think too much is being made out of this single statement in his State of the Union address. The fact of the matter is that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, continued to develop weapons of mass destruction throughout the 90's during a period of time when UN. resolution after UN resolution told him that it had to stop, that he had to come clean and he ignored all of those resolutions to the point that in 1998 when the inspectors were learning even more, he created a set of conditions that forced the inspectors out, requiring President Clinton to go and bomb these facilities that were believed at that time by the previous administration, to be facilities designed to produce even more weapons of mass destruction. The international community believed as a community that he had such weapons and I'm quite confident that as we go forward with the investigations and the searches that are underway in Iraq now, more evidence will be found to show to the world that he was guilty as charged of possessing these weapons.

So to single out this one statement having to do with an intelligence picture that wasn't entirely clear with respect to what he might have been trying to do with respect to acquiring uranium in Africa, I think there is quite an overstatement and quite an overreaction to this one line. The President wasn't in any way trying to mislead. It was information that got into the speech, whether it should or should not have been in the speech is something we can certainly discuss and debate. But it wasn't a deliberate attempt on the part of the President to either mislead or exaggerate. That's just ridiculous.

**MR. KING:** Okay. The current situation in Iraq, what do you make of it? Somebody seems killed every day. What's your assessment?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The Iraqi people have been liberated. Ambassador Bremer and his team are doing a remarkable job in restoring the infrastructure to the country – an infrastructure that was destroyed by Saddam Hussein by 30 years of misrule. Yes, there are still dangerous areas in the country. I regret we are still losing troops and young men and women are being wounded; but they are being wounded by people who don't want to see the Iraqi people free, by people who still cling to this terrible past, Ba'ath party members, Fedayeen, and others who resent the fact that the international community, led by the United States, is there to try to create a better life for the Iraqi people.

I am quite confident in the ability of our military forces and other nations that will be joining the coalition and the other coalition members who are there now to put down this level of violence. These folks that still don't understand that it is a new day for Iraq. But they will be put down, security will be achieved, and then we can get on with the business of rebuilding a country and helping that country put in place a representative form of government. I am confident that Ambassador Bremer knows how to go about this; he is doing a great job. In the very near future, he will be announcing political leaders, Iraqis who will start to exercise authority under Ambassador Bremer. People will begin working on a constitution and over time the Iraqi people will have their country given back to them and in far better

shape than we found it.

**MR. KING:** A few other areas. By the way, should we have expected this?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't think what we are seeing is totally unexpected. You never can anticipate everything that is going to happen in a post-conflict environment. But we knew that once the regime was taken down, there would be 25 million people roughly who we would have responsibility for and that the existing structure that would have been badly damaged or destroyed -- the Ba'ath party leadership, the military, the police forces, so we knew that we were in for a challenging time and a difficult time and we are going to be able to deal with it. As the President said we are committed; we know the challenge ahead of us is great but we are up to that challenge.

**MR. KING:** The front page of today's *USA Today* has the headline "Allies Balk at Sending Troops." Do you discount that?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we are working with a number of allies who have made commitments. The Poles have already started to send in their advance party teams. We are working with a number of nations around the world. Secretary Rumsfeld and his team are in touch with these nations determining what their needs are, where to integrate them, we are dividing up sectors. I think a number of nations are planning to come forward. I can't give you the exact number of nations or how many troops are going to be committed. The guts of the work will still have to be done by the United States, Great Britain and the original members of the coalition. But I am quite sure that we will have a number of other nations joining us on the field because they understand the importance of the mission and they too are committed to a future Iraq that no longer has weapons of mass destruction and is living in peace with its neighbors.

**MR. KING:** The last time we were together you told me how difficult, as you saw it, the Mideast situation was and how difficult it will be to get those people together. Are you a little more confident now?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I'm a little more confident and I'm a little more optimistic. I'm pleased that we were finally able to present the roadmap to the parties. And both parties have done quite a bit already in moving down the path laid out in the roadmap. But there is a lot of work ahead of us. I am pleased that we have seen the transfer of Gaza back to the Palestinians, Bethlehem as well. I hope other cities will follow in due course. Israel, for its part, has taken down some of the unauthorized outposts, released some prisoners. I hope more prisoner releases will be forthcoming. We have to take this a day at a time, a step at a time. But I am impressed that both sides realize that they couldn't keep doing what they were doing. What was happening with the constant terror and violence and the response to terror and violence -- that cycle that went on and on had to be broken. President Bush, with his strong leadership at the Sharm al-Sheikh Summit and the Aqaba Summit, showed them the way forward and they have taken that way forward.

**MR. KING:** Two other quick things: Usama bin Ladin, Saddam Hussein. Must they be caught?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't know if they will be caught or not. I would like to see both of them caught. But the important thing with respect to Saddam Hussein is that he is no longer in power. There may be remnants of his organization around but they will be dealt with in due course and he will never be back in power. With respect to Usama bin Ladin, he is still out there we believe. We cannot be sure, we don't know if he is dead or alive. If he is dead, we'd like to see his body to prove it. If he's alive, we will eventually hunt him down and find him. As long as they are out there, they can cause trouble. We are prepared to deal with that trouble and we will not end the search until we have found out what happened to them, whether they are dead or alive.

**MR. KING:** And one other thing on Africa. What has impacted the President the most in your opinion?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I think he was moved especially by Goree Island -- to have the conditions of capturing people explained to him, and to see the places where they were actually put and how they were treated just as cargo, as a commodities to be sold -- I think he was deeply moved by that. I think he was also moved by his time in Senegal and South Africa and today Botswana to see countries that are committed to democracy, committed to reform, committed to attacking the problems of HIV/AIDS, committed to a better relationship with the United States. He was moved. He was moved by the people that he has met, the leaders that he has seen. So, I think the President will come away from his trip with a much deeper understanding of the needs of Africa and an even greater commitment to giving everything we can to satisfy those needs.

**MR. KING:** Thank you, Mr. Secretary, it is always good seeing you. Safe trip home.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you, Larry.

[End]

Released on July 10, 2003

---

This site is managed by the Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State.  
External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.