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## Interview With The Washington Times Editorial Board

### Secretary Colin L. Powell

Washington, DC

July 22, 2003

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It is a great pleasure to welcome you and all of your colleagues. I thought, with your permission, let me just say a few words to begin with and then we can get into whatever issue of the day you would like to pursue.

**QUESTION:** Absolutely.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Let me sneak into it this way by saying that the President had a terrific trip to Africa week before last -- the first Republican President to visit Africa. I would say no President has ever gone to Africa with as much substance as President Bush did when you look at what he did with respect to the Millennium Challenge Account, what he is doing with respect to HIV/AIDS, expansion of AGOA, a number of other programs that directly affect people in need in Africa and to show U.S. commitment to Africa.

He also has a better understanding of the possibilities in Africa and the challenges in Africa. Now why do I lead with Africa? It is to show that the President has a much broader agenda than one sees written about from day-to-day. Over the past two and a half years, now, of his administration, he really has moved out on that agenda.

And if you look at our National Security Strategy, you will see there is no chapter that says "preemption." It talks about partnerships. It talks about alliances. It talks about human rights. It talks about open trade. It talks about all of those things that will make a better world for all people.

It also talks about standing up for America's values, and also makes it clear that we will have a military second to none and when we are challenged, and if it goes to something that is a vital interest of ours or puts the American people at risk, the President will act.

So it is a broader agenda than often we are given credit for, and I think it has paid off in many ways.

When you look at Asia, we worry about North Korea, and I am ready to talk about that, but I wanted to get started. When you look at the rest of Asia, we have done I think a pretty good job under this President in putting in place the best relationship we have had with China in decades after kind of a rocky start with our reconnaissance airplane caper in early April two years ago. But ever since we got beyond that, it has been all up.

We always have to be sensitive to what might happen with respect to China and Taiwan and their sensitivity with respect to Taiwan, but otherwise we have put together a good program with China.

Our alliances with the Philippines and Thailand and Japan and South Korea are solid -- and I will come back to that when we talk about North Korea -- and particularly in South Korea, where there was a bit of concern over the last few months with anti-Americanism in South Korea, but that tends to come in waves and go in waves, and right now with the new president, President Roh, I think we are in pretty good shape.

We have to be concerned about Muslim attitudes in parts of Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly, as affected by our ability to make progress in the Middle East peace plan and also our efforts in Iraq.

In the Subcontinent, we probably have the best relations we have had with India and Pakistan now than in many, many years. It was because of that I think that it allowed us to play a very helpful role in defusing the crisis that we were all writing about and thinking about last summer just about this time. We no longer see the Subcontinent as solely an India-

Pakistan-U.S. problem, but U.S.-India, U.S.-Pakistan. Both countries realize that the United States is now an honest friend to both, and we can help both as they move toward one another.

Last year at this time I was up to my ears with concern about a conflict that might break out because of the mobilization that had taken place and many of you, your colleagues, were writing about the potential of nuclear war.

I spoke to the Indian Foreign Minister yesterday, Mr. Sinha. We talked about the bus route that has been opened, return of the high commissioners, exchange of documents, the SARC meeting, a regional conference that will be held in Islamabad that India will be attending.

So a lot has happened, and even with what happened and even with what happened today in Kashmir over the last 24 hours, I think both sides are now committed to improving the dialogue -- not with deep passes, let's have a summit and put two leaders together -- let's do a ground game. I like ground games. Ground games tend to gain ground. We have been gaining ground in bringing the Indians and the Pakistanis together.

In our own hemisphere, we have a lot more work to do, but the President is committed to a Free Trade Area of the Americas. He is committed to other free trade agreements. We just concluded one with Chile. He is also committed to democratization, beyond democratization -- all of our nations in this hemisphere are now democracies with the exception of Cuba. But many of them are in different states of strength and fragility and he is committed to helping each one of them ground their democracy on a solid base and you do that by improving the economy so that people can see the benefit of democracy.

So many people come into my office who are -- have been democracies now for 10 years, and they are up for reelection. And they are saying, "You know people want to know why don't I have more food on the table? Why isn't the roof over my head better," and these issues. The President is committed to try to help them.

Europe was much discussed in recent months as a result of what was going on in the UN and Iraq. But now that we have come out of that and the reconstruction effort is underway in Iraq. I think that you can see that there will be a level of cooperation with Europe that will reflect the importance that we put on Europe and Europe puts on the United States and the need for a strong transatlantic alliance.

Joschka Fishcher was here not too long ago and brought me a fresh case of German pop-top beer and I gave him the empties to take back from the last visit. (Laughter) But things are getting better and you can see it reflected in some of the statements that Joschka made. And my French colleague and I have been in conversation and I expect him to come over the tail end of the summer, early fall.

We have had disagreements with some of our best allies, but they are still our best allies. We will work through these disagreements in a way that serves our interest as well as our mutual interests. Alliances and partnerships are important.

In the major crises of the day, Iraq, of course, is still center-stage and we are awaiting some news this afternoon -- I will get to your question before you do -- because I don't -- I can't confirm anything. We will wait until Don [Rumsfeld] gets whatever he gets, and I will leave it there.

But notwithstanding the security difficulties we are having, Jerry Bremer's doing a great job with the political strategy he has put in place. He is hard at work on security. But the key here is the economy and the infrastructure. You get the power up and stable and people stop knocking down power lines, and you get job creation underway, and you start to break the pattern of the past where it was all dependent upon the government -- government subsidies, government-run industries, government everything. All that went away in a couple weeks' time and so we have a rebuilding effort in front of us, and the President's committed to making sure that we stay with it as we move forward.

It will take the efforts of not just the coalition that is there but other nations, and we are working to get other nations involved; looking at the possibility of more UN resolutions as appropriate, but no decision has been made on that yet.

The President said that when Iraq was dealt with and when the Palestinian people came up with new leadership, he would engage. He did that in the Aqaba Summit and the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit the day before. Now we have a roadmap unfolding before us that many people thought would never see the light of day and would never gain any traction.

Once again, it is a ground game. This is a little like India-Pakistan in that you measure success in small, modest steps.

So every time there is a meeting, if there is no breakthrough, everybody writes, "No breakthrough, things are stalled." Things are moving along at a pace that both sides can handle and we will be pushing both sides during their visits here this week and next week. But the reality is the violence has dropped significantly. The number of terrorist incidents has gone down significantly. The Palestinians are now responsible for the security in Gaza, Bethlehem, and other places are being made ready. Prisoners have been released. Outposts have been taken down. The important thing here is that both sides, as they said at Aqaba, recognize that they must work with each other and move forward. What is the alternative to that? It is not a pleasant alternative for either of the sides.

So I think we have a new energy in this process and the President is engaged and as you can see, the Administration is knitted together on this issue as never before. Condi and I are teaming up on this and John Wolf being our man on the scene with both Ambassador Kurtzer and Consul General Jeff Feltman.

That is a quick pop around the world for you. The only other place I would touch on is Russia, where I started off with a problem in Russia. You remember the spy caper early on and I bounced 52 people out of the country? The first meeting I ever had with the Russian ambassador, he came in to sit down and say, "Welcome, and I'm going to Moscow tomorrow. What message would you like me to deliver?"

(Laughter.)

"Well, you may want to make a phone call first." And I told him we were going to take out 52, send home 52. A day later my new Russia colleague Igor Ivanov called me to say, "You know, this is really, bad, bad, bad and we will also, then, throw out 52." I said, "I understand. I've been in this business for a number of years." Then 3 days later we did it and then he called and said, "We're not going to do anything else. Are you going to do anything else?" "No. This game is over. Let's go on." And we did.

Over the last 2+ years, except for the disagreement over Iraq, we have been pretty much on a steady track with Russia. We got out of the ABM Treaty as the President said he would because it was constraining missile defense. We are working on missile defense. And notwithstanding all of that, we got the Treaty of Moscow, which reduced strategic offensive weapons, signed, ratified by both parties, and instruments of ratification exchanged all in a relatively short period of time.

We expanded NATO without Russia coming apart as a result of the Baltic States being included in NATO and we expanded the concept of NATO so that it now includes Russia as part of the NATO-Russia Council. I think this is a rather rich and broad agenda that the President has executed over the last 2+ years, 2-1/2 years, and you are all well familiar with what he has tried to do with open trade, WTO and lots of other onesies and twosies that I can touch on. I think it is in agenda and performance on an agenda that this administration and the nation can be proud of.

I like to tell all of my groups when I have them here (at the State Department) that I am not only the Foreign Policy Advisor to the President, but I am also the CEO of the Department of State. We have done quite a bit here over the last 2-1/2 years. There was a period of time in the '90s when nobody was being hired in the Department. They weren't allowed to hire anybody. In the last 2-1/2 years we have reversed that with the support of the Congress and the American people, tried to change the attitude of the Department, the management of the Department, the leadership aspects of the Department, our relations with Congress are the best we have ever had. I now have an office up on Capitol Hill to take care of constituent services, where in the past, they would stay as far away from Capitol Hill as they could.

I was with Denny Hastert this morning talking about the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. Last year I had 30,000 young Americans take the Foreign Service Exam to be a part of this Department. So far this year, another 20-odd thousand have taken it. My great problem is that I can only hire a couple hundred a year above attrition. So I think we have got a lot to talk about with respect to the way in which the Department has been managed, whether it is fixing the buildings program, or the security aspects -- you haven't written about single security failure in the Department in the 2-1/2 years that we have been here.

So we have been trying to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the American people and try to be as accountable and answerable to the American people as we can. Your time is up. Thank you.

(Laughter.)

With that, I will now give you your 30 minutes.

**QUESTION:** We appreciate very much your having us down here. To begin right on, our lead story this morning was Liberia and I guess it might be tomorrow unless these two guys do turn out to be the sons, in which case, that will probably be our lead story. However, could you talk a little bit about Liberia, what you see as our national interest there? And the "Powell Doctrine" as I understand it, one of the key elements is an exit strategy. What about the exit strategy from there?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I could go off on a 30-minute discussion on what the so-called "Powell Doctrine" is. But Powell is a doctrinaire in the Pentagon who's been gone for 10 years, so anybody -- it's something new.

My view is that you should have a clear political objective if you're going to commit forces and then commit the necessary forces to achieve that objective. That's what I've always believed.

In Liberia, if you ask the question, "What is our strategic, vital interest?" It would be hard to define that in that way. But we do have an interest in making sure that West Africa doesn't simply come apart. We do have an interest in showing the people of Africa that we can support efforts to stabilize a tragic situation and to work with others to bring relief to people, people who are desperately in need.

We do have a historic link to Liberia. We do have some obligation as the most important powerful nation on the face of the earth not to look away when a problem like this comes before us. We looked away once before in Rwanda with tragic consequences. This is not Rwanda, nor is it Somalia. It is a different situation.

The way we have approached it is with the international community, working with Kofi Annan. I talk to him every day on this at least once, and working with ECOWAS. And in his conversations in Africa, talking directly to foreign leaders two weeks ago, what we said that we would do is put in place a strategy that would call for a ceasefire, and ECOWAS had done that; call for the departure of Charles Taylor -- he's agreed to leave, but whether he does and how he does and when he does is another issue -- and that he would leave with the arrival of ECOWAS peacekeeping forces.

Where we have lost time and not moving as rapidly as I would like is identifying and putting in place and determining what those ECOWAS forces need from the United States or from the international community to do the job.

The President has said he is willing to support them and the President has also said that he is willing to consider what other participation beyond support might be needed from the United States in terms of giving some spine to the mission. But he has always seen this mission as very limited in terms of scope and duration. There is manpower in Africa: in Nigeria, in Mali, in Morocco, in other countries, that has already been identified, Senegal, that could give the manpower needed to deal with the situation in Monrovia and perhaps elsewhere in the country.

The political strategy also includes constitutional succession, put a new president in place from Charles Taylor's -- upon Charles Taylor's departure, then a transitional government, and then elections.

Kofi [Annan] has made it clear that he is not asking or expecting us to have anything to do with that political transition. That is why we asked for and got a Secretary General Special Representative, an American, Jacques Klein that I think you all know, who has a track record of success in knowing how to get these kinds of jobs done.

The President has made it clear to his African interlocutors, as well as to Kofi [Annan] that we would be enablers to get this thing underway. Today there is a meeting in Dakar, Senegal, and Linc Bloomfield, my Assistant Secretary for Political and Military Affairs is there with representatives from the Pentagon making an assessment as to how quickly some element of the peacekeeping force from ECOWAS can be moved to Monrovia and with what assistance from the United States. Could that happen?

It is important to try to get that vanguard, as they are calling themselves, in as quickly as possible. I hope that by tomorrow I will have a better sense of how quickly they can move and what it would take for us to support that movement and to give them logistic sustainment and whatever else might be required.

We put the 41 extra Marines in yesterday because I was concerned about the security of the Embassy. The Embassy did take some mortar fire yesterday, which caused me to stop in the middle of the day and make a judgment as to the overall safety of the Embassy, but it is relatively quiet now, but it is a fragile situation and I am watching it very closely.

**QUESTION:** It's interesting, Mr. Secretary, your explanation when you talk about how -- that you've described us as the most powerful nation on the planet or in the world that we almost have an obligation,

we can't look away from a situation like this. But doesn't this open the door to the very thing that Candidate Bush criticized President Clinton for is the United States as the "World's Policeman?" I mean, if every time there's a situation somewhere in the world --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No.

**QUESTION:** -- we can't turn away from it.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No, but remember where I stopped was, you can't ignore it. There is no situation you can ignore. It doesn't mean, necessarily, the United States has to be the policeman that goes in.

In the case of Cote d'Ivoire, it was the French. In the case of Sierra Leone, it was the British. In the case of Bunia in Northeast Congo, it is the French and others. And so, in the case of Afghanistan it's us, but we are supported by a lot of other nations. That is what we are trying to do in Iraq and in Bosnia and in Kosovo. We are also supported by a lot of other nations.

In this case, though, with all of our other European friends pretty stretched, and with Liberia having a direct historical connection to the United States and some -- the people would welcome U.S. presence. People look to us for this one. What the President said is, "Let's lead with ECOWAS. Let's find a regional solution." We have been training battalions in Africa for this purpose. And as he said we are going to train more. But sometimes they need some backbone to get started and they certainly need logistics.

**QUESTION:** Right. How willing are they to help us, though? I mean, how willing are they to be the peacekeeping force?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** They say they are very willing and there is no lack of willingness. Some of these nations just don't have the capacity to deploy forces and keep them sustained in the field. I don't need 250 guys with no equipment. I need something that is capable. But you take them from one of these countries where they were never developed and trained as a force to deploy, then you have to give them the capability to deploy, and how do you sustain them?

Only the United States, France, Britain, maybe one or two other countries have that kind of capability within their armed forces.

**QUESTION:** When you mentioned in your opening statement that our best allies are still our best allies, referring to Europe, I surmise, Tony Blair, when he was here pointedly observed that there cannot be another polarity, we should be united, not divided. I assume, I think as everyone did, he was making reference there to what some people consider as France's policy of being some sort of an alternative polarity force.

In that context, is that part of our best ally is still our best ally? And if not, why was Blair --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Which part -- France?

**QUESTION:** France.

In other words, I mean, given that France has presumably, at least people, some people think, has made a judgment that it would be useful for them and the world to have an alternative polarity to the United States, can we -- to what extent can we still consider them the ally that they were when the polarity with the Soviet Union and us?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I still consider France an ally. We are together in NATO. We work closely in Bosnia, in Kosovo. We work closely with the French in Afghanistan, in other places around the world. Even when we were having difficulty over the Iraq issue, we had no resistance to overflights and anything else we required from France.

We had a major disagreement on this issue of Iraq, and we faced that disagreement and we went on. But I am not one who says that France is now an enemy having had this one disagreement. And, with respect to the observation that, well, is France now out there trying to round up candidates to be the other pole of a multi-polar system? That might be reading too much into French politics and French foreign policy.

I am not naïve, but I think that when the dust settles on all of this over some period of time -- months -- I wouldn't say it is going to take years and years, everybody will see that when the Euro-Atlantic Alliance works together, the transatlantic

alliance works together, a lot can be done, just as Mr. Blair said. I won't put words in his mouth that he was referring to France, but it's a reasonable inference.

But you know, three months ago everybody was writing it already existed. It was France, Russia and Germany. And now, voila, now it's just France. Well, I would submit that let's wait awhile. Wait for the dust to settle to see where our mutual interests are. And I think everybody will discover over time that our mutual interests will still rest on the closest possible partnership relationship between the United States and Europe.

Does this mean that there will never be disagreements and debates within this family? There will always be disagreements and debates. That is what happens when you have democratic nations dealing with difficult issues.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, you mentioned about the need to get some other countries helping with Iraq. How much authority in Iraq would the United States be willing to cede to the United Nations to get other countries to come on board?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we are not anxious to change the current arrangement that we have, which seems to be working rather well with a Coalition Provisional Authority, and a Secretary General representative, and Mr. De Mello gave I think a fine presentation this morning before the United Nations.

But a number of our friends have said to us before they would be able to contribute to our efforts in Iraq, they would need another UN resolution that had a broader mandate, and a more direct mandate than 1483 has, as they see it. I think 1483 is adequate, as do many nations that are there.

Once you start putting such a resolution down, there will be others who will come along and say, aha. But if you are going to ask for resolution for a broader mandate, then the control of that mandate has to be, at least more than it is now, in the hands of the UN, or the UN having more of a role to play than it does now.

Let a debate begin on this subject, and I am willing to participate in that debate if it achieves the purpose of getting more people involved. But we would not be -- you know, I'd listen to the arguments, but I can't give you a straight answer now because I don't know what the traffic will demand or what the traffic will bear.

**QUESTION:** In Iraq and elsewhere, we seem to be coming -- as you mentioned, troops are stretched pretty thin -- in Afghanistan, in Iraq, trying to find troops to come from Liberia.

Are we running to stretch so thin it's starting to constrain policy decisions, and has there been any discussion at all within the administration that perhaps a larger military is necessary?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** We are clearly stressing force. There is no doubt about that. It is difficult to keep that large a force deployed with the numbers that are in the overall force. I have not been in any discussion where we have decided to change any of our policies, or even talked about changing our policies because of the stress on the force. The force is stretched, but it still has capability that is unused, but I will let Don and Dick Myers make the definitive statement on that.

With respect to expanding the size of the force, I haven't participated in any conversations on that subject, and I don't know what the Pentagon's thinking is. I don't -- I am just not sure of what they would decide to put forward in next year's budget with respect to force structure and needs for increased force structure and personnel.

**QUESTION:** How has --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I used to do that.

**QUESTION:** How has the wrangling over intelligence data in this country and in Great Britain impacted our efforts in Iraq?

I mean, clearly, it has to embolden the opposition over there, the resistance, if you will, to see division in American policy, division in British policy. Somalia comes to mind, things like that. How is that impacting us over there?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't know that it really is impacting opposition. If you mean those Baathists and the Fedeyeen --

**QUESTION:** Right, people who are shooting us.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** -- I'd be surprised if they are sitting around reading about the 16 words in the State of the Union Address, and what Mr. Blair said, or what George said, or what Condi said, or what I said. I really don't think this is motivating them.

To the extent that they believe that Mr. Blair and President Bush have been weakened in some way, I think that gives them -- you know, that's certainly something they would welcome, but they're deceiving themselves if they welcomed it very long because I think this will all pass in due course.

People will see that what President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and the other members of the coalition did was right. As more graves are opened, as more mass killings are made known, and as Mr. Kay completes his work in Iraq searching for additional -- or the evidence needed to make it clear to everybody that we knew what we were talking about with respect to weapons of mass destruction. I think this issue of what was in the State of the Union Address will fade into insignificance.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** You know intelligence is not always perfect knowledge. Information comes along, you take the information and try to assess its validity, and you convert it into a piece of intelligence. Sometimes it comes with lots of qualifiers on it, and it is up to policymakers to make judgments as to whether you can -- that intelligence is something you can make a policy decision about.

I have been through it many times where something looked very good at a particular point in time and looked better over time or looked worse over time, as more information came in. With respect to the State of the Union Address, they were looking for things that could make the case to the American people. This was an item that was in the intelligence world. It was referred to in NIEs and other documents, and it went into the State of the Union Address.

On reflection, did it meet the standard that might have been appropriate for a State of the Union Address?

You have heard the judgments that have been rendered on that. But by the time I was prepared and ready to go up and present it to the world, I had to make sure that there wasn't any more questioning of what I was going to put forward because I had a heck of an audience.

The audience I was most worried about was not the audience in the Security Council. It wasn't even the massive television audience waiting for the Adlai Stevenson moment. It was the Iraqis who, if they knew more than me, could shoot down anything I said if I didn't have it right. I wasn't worried about you guys. I was worried about the Iraqis showing up that afternoon or the next morning with something that would shoot down something I said.

So that is why mine was done in the way that it was done. The only thing anybody came up with was the Iraqis, of course, said it's all lies. The only challenge was debate about the centrifuges, which I acknowledged at the time I presented it. There was a debate.

Then a couple of days later, a week or so later, there was some question about one of the overheads I used of a bunker complex, as to whether everybody agreed with my characterization of what made a particular bunker look like a chemical weapons storage bunker. Otherwise, do your Lexis-Nexis and see how many Iraqi attacks I got on my presentation.

**QUESTION:** But surely the -- I mean, these -- the opposition on that, the guerrillas, if you will, it's a fairly sophisticated group in its leadership, I would think. And they are not unaware of the less -- I mean, they are conducting a classic guerrilla operation against us, these single, you know, single shot attacks on people, and things like that. They're not coming at us head on as a military operation. Surely, they are not unaware of the lessons of history that they can -- they can wear you down with that kind of thing.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Your question dealt with, are they sitting around reading our newspapers every day about --

**QUESTION:** Well, no, I wasn't suggesting they're reading the *Washington Times* and the *Washington Post* every day but --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No, but any -- but, surely, of course, they'd welcome anything that looks like disarray within the coalition, sure they do. But is this what is driving them more so than their own desire to inflict casualties on coalition forces?

No, I don't know that it makes a marginal difference to them. I don't know how classic a counterinsurgency it is yet, and I don't know how organized and sophisticated they are yet. I have not yet seen a body of evidence that says this is the equivalent of what we saw in Vietnam, and that all of these pieces are connected, and that there is one central nervous system that pulls us all together.

Some of them are nothing more than criminals. Some of them are terrorists. Some of them are people who are resentful of American presence and are going to take shots at us, and there are others who realize that American presence is going to work and it will work against their interests over time and they're going to take shots at us.

But what they will discover is what others have discovered over the years -- America has much more staying power and understands that occasionally this kind of effort requires sacrifice, requires the loss of life on the part of our young soldiers. And that's why they are called soldiers.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Every life, regretted; every life lost, regretted.

**QUESTION:** Before we move to Korea, could you address briefly the issues of the intelligence community (inaudible) that we hear reports about.

I have been talking to people last week. There are people who tell me in this building that some of the high officials at the Department don't trust the INR Bureau. There are people who say in the entire community -- on the other side of the issue, there are many people hired by the previous administration who are trying now to politicize their analysis, something which should be very clear-cut, now they are trying to sneak in political advice or their own opinion.

So it seems to me there are two groups of people at least, the one group who is doing this with political views and opinions, another group that supposedly sexed up or hyped up intelligence of their own analysis after a call from the Vice President or the Vice President walked to analyst's desk of the CIA, and then I hear these things very often these days.

In terms of your own bureau here, how much do you trust these people? Are they over stretched? Do you have enough people to work on these issues? And how do you see their relationship with the rest of the IC?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I trust my intelligence bureau, INR. I think as this story spills out, they look pretty good in terms of what they told me. I spoke to all of them yesterday in an awards ceremony, and I spoke to them at a swearing in the other day when one of their Deputy Assistant Secretaries was appointed to be an ambassador.

And what I said to them is your job is to tell me the truth as you see it. Your job is to get all of this information and convert it into intelligence that is usable to a policymaker. I expect you to tell me what you believe is true, tell me what you don't know. When you are not sure then speculate with me, but tell me you are speculating, and then it is my job to make the judgment as to how I respond to this intelligence you are giving me and I bear responsibility for that. You do not serve me loyally, and you do not serve the President loyally, and above all, you do not serve the American people if you do not tell us what you believe to be the truth.

The only one they have to worry about approving or disapproving of their work is me. I am not sure what senior officials you are talking to, but the only one they are answerable to is to me. When they see that I am off what they think is base, or they think I have said something, "You ought to be careful, boss." Carl Ford shoots me a memo, as he has done in the course of these proceedings, if I can put it that way, which says, you know, "I don't quite come to the same conclusion as others have."

It is then my job to make sure that his information is made known to other members of the intelligence community, and that is between me, George, Don, Condi, the Vice President, the rest of us, to determine the policy implications of that. So I have confidence in INR, and they know I have confidence in them, and they know that I respect them for their intellectual judgment and their honesty. INR is in no way politicized because I am the one who would politicize them and I have not. I am the political appointee, not them.



**QUESTION:** You mentioned as CEO of the Department, you were pleased with the change in attitude of the Department. What was the prior attitude that you are pleased is no longer the case?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I found that -- I don't want to be critical or self-serving. This is awkward.

I found the place was a little down and demoralized. We hadn't been funding it well. I asked my staff one morning early on, "How many of you feel free to go and speak to Congressmen any time you're called?" Almost no hands went up, and we changed the attitude.

I said, "If I can't trust my Assistant Secretaries to go up any time you are called by a member of Congress to testify to speak to them, to brief them, then you either don't trust what I am giving you as guidance, or you don't have the confidence necessary to do this." Neither of these is an acceptable leadership environment for me. So we are all on one team. We all support the President. We all serve the President's policies. And I have tried to inculcate that philosophy throughout the Department.

I have got lots of political appointees in senior positions. I have got a lot of Foreign Service officers in senior positions. I think I have got a pretty good match. We could go into the continuum of attitudes, but let's not do that right now. (Laughter).

But you know them as well as I do. I think we do a hell of a job with serving the President and his policies. Another example is we had -- we were in constant fights with Congress about how we are managing the building program. I put a professional in charge of it, General Williams. I haven't had a complaint in almost two years.

We were in trouble with security. We have fixed that. We were in difficulties with Congress and others. And you all have -- your newspapers have taken us to task severely about how we were handling child abduction cases and visa problems. We put somebody in who is really -- who has really gotten on top of that -- Maura Harty -- who was mightily condemned by a number of people, including your newspaper. She has done a terrific job. She has -- her instructions are: you will solve these problems, and you will be totally responsive to the Congress's needs.

I would suggest you go talk to those Congressmen who were most critical of the Department in past years and see how we are doing in recent years -- in recent months. With respect to child custody cases, we have changed the attitude on that, so that Maura works very closely with Dan Burton and others who have particular -- we haven't solved them all. These are difficult domestic cases, but we have made a lot of progress. We have got a lot of families reunited.

We were forever being accused of being insensitive to Congress. I testified before every committee, every year, eight times on my budget. I opened an office in Capitol Hill -- somebody will appreciate this -- so that now I provide constituent services to the Congress and to Capitol Hill.

All of this reflected an attitudinal change that we are not some little isolated organization down here in Foggy Bottom. We are part of the National Security team, and we will serve the President, we will serve the Congress, we will serve the American people. I think the fact that we are seeing such a rush of people trying to come into the Department suggests that we have at least changed the attitude and the image we have been portraying to the country and to the world -- not to the satisfaction of everybody, as we all know.

**QUESTION:** Let's go to Korea, if we can. Time is getting a little bit --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** -- a little bit tight here.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I'm all right.

**QUESTION:** Okay. What -- could we move? What's going on? Is it still the most dangerous place in the world?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It is a dangerous place. It is a country that says it has nuclear weapons. It says -- it told us 10 years ago it had nuclear weapons. We know of two programs that it has to develop materials for nuclear weapons -- the Yongbyon facility and its plutonium reprocessing capability, and the enriched uranium facility that we detected a couple of years ago and called to their attention last year.

So, yes, it is dangerous, and we are responding to that danger. Not every situation gets the same solution. In this case, we discovered the enriched uranium facility and we confronted them with it last October, and told them, "You know this is not going to do anything for you and you need to stop, and we need to find a diplomatic solution to this." The President said that. They didn't respond.

What we did was then mobilize the international community, got the IAEA to condemn their actions. What has not been I think commented on enough is the way in which, over the last six months or so, we have pulled every neighbor of North Korea into alignment on this issue.

The Chinese are now publicly committed in support of the denuclearized Peninsula. They always were. But now they are more publicly committed and it comes out of the top leadership of the Chinese Government. South Korea always uneasy about its relationship with the North is solidly on our side of the issue looking for a multilateral forum in which to discuss this issue.

The Japanese, which -- they made a big overture to North Korea last year with Mister Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang, once we had the kidnapped victims go back, and that didn't turn out as well as they thought it might -- but once he also got wind of what they were doing in nuclear weapons, he pulled back. There were billions of dollars that were about to help North Korea. It's all been pulled back. The Russians, after equivocating for some months, now also support what we are trying to do.

Why are we doing it this way? Because we tried it the other way last time. The last time was a two-party deal. And although I always give credit to my predecessors in the Clinton administration for freezing Yongbyon for 8 years, they didn't shut down Yongbyon and it was still there waiting to pop out at a time of the North Koreans' choosing.

And while everybody was watching Yongbyon, they were doing another one. "Hey, if we can sell it once, let's sell it twice."

This Administration has decided, "Fellows, you in the region have more at stake than we do, and we're not going to allow this to become just a U.S.-D.P.R.K. problem." Some of my severest critics have been out all over television on the weekend saying that we should do this, we should do that, meaning go speak to the North Koreans directly, show them how, you know, scared you are, and see what it is we have to pay to get them to do -- what? -- What they did last time?

No, we need a comprehensive solution, and it has to involve all of the neighbors. Now, some delicate diplomacy is necessary to get us to a point where we can move forward on the diplomatic track, and that diplomacy is underway. I had the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister here on Friday night for two-and-a-half hours. We have good discussions. They know our position. Our position reflects also the position of our friends in the region.

The Chinese are serving as our interlocutor with the North Koreans. I think that is pretty good diplomacy. The Chinese are involved, and they now have an equity in finding the right solution to this. So it takes time. North Koreans do things which are troubling. It appears that there is reprocessing taking place. Some of the other stories of last week about second plants, and the like, as you noted in your paper today, don't really -- nobody can establish that at this point, but we are not treating this lightly. And, of course, the President has removed no option from the table.

**QUESTION:** What about this suggestion -- I think -- I believe the *New York Times* had it this morning that the President seems to be soft-pedaling the North Korea issue.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I read what he said. I talked to him and I don't -- you know, I don't know that he has changed anything.

**QUESTION:** No, he was justifying his quote from Saturday because the President could absolutely not confirm the second.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't comment on what correspondents do. (Laughter.) I learned my lesson years ago.

**QUESTION:** Can you tell us about this trilat? And I understand the -- Foreign Vice Minister Dai has very good reading skills.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Very good reading skills?

**QUESTION:** Reading.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Face reading, or reading, reading?

**QUESTION:** No, reading.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes, he does, yes. Yes, he does.

**QUESTION:** Now, I also understand that the Chinese appear to be a little more optimistic before he came here about the possibility of another meeting. You saw that date in the South Korean meeting yesterday as September 6. But, as far as I know, there is nothing like that said.

But the point is, if you hold another meeting at three, then are you going to hold it just -- and I also understand that your condition is there has to be some kind of a signal from the North Koreans that they will agree to the meeting at five before you meet at three; then he (inaudible). Are you going to discuss at that meeting at three what's going to happen at the meeting five?

Are you going to call the meeting at three as a save facing gesture to the North Koreans, so they can then explain to the world that that's why they dropped their demand for bilateral talks with you?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I deeply appreciate your question. (Laughter) But if it is all the same to you, and I don't offend you or anyone else, I am going to hold on to my negotiating and diplomatic strategy for a bit longer before making it public and on the record.

**QUESTION:** But my question is, are you now less -- or when you came out on Wednesday was it or --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Wednesday.

**QUESTION:** -- with Joschka Fischer.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Last Wednesday?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** You said you expect developments in the very near future. And he came, I guess that was the development. But you did sound a little optimistic than you sound today. Was it the Chinese, once they -- you met with him and he told you what the North Koreans had said at Pyongyang (inaudible)?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I don't think you can -- no, I didn't intend to shade my degree of optimism or pessimism. I am just trying to report where we are today. So I think you may be reading --

**QUESTION:** You think you might be reading Powell soft pedals North Korea? (Laughter)

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, probably. But I think you are reading too much into the nuance between a stand in front with Joschka before the meeting, and what I was referring to with Joschka was the Chinese are coming. They have just been in Pyongyang, same guy, and his picture was in the *New York Times*, either that day or the next day, with Kim Jong Il.

I was just at that moment suggesting that we were going to have discussions on Friday, and we did -- extensive -- and I found Friday's discussions very productive. He gave me a very long presentation, as you have divined. And I tend not to read from scripts, so mine was a little bit shorter, as you know. And it was a good discussion, and now we are waiting to see what is going to happen.

**QUESTION:** So he is taking it back to Pyongyang, your discussion?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** He -- I don't know what his travel plans are. I'm sure he has communicated certainly back to Beijing and by now, perhaps -- I don't know -- back to Pyongyang, the substance of our discussions, which were full, wide ranging, comprehensive.

**QUESTION:** It is fair to say that --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The President didn't say anything yesterday that changes anything he said before.

**QUESTION:** But is it fair to say that you are not doing --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Keep in mind that I was also, at that time, I think, with Fischer, responding to Bill Perry.

**QUESTION:** Right.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Who said, "War is going to break out any day."

**QUESTION:** Could I ask one -- I just wondered is it fair to say that you are not going to agree to another trilateral meeting before there are signs from the North Koreans that they meet at five?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I am not going to answer that because I don't -- I can't answer that. You are asking me is it fair to say something -- is it fair for you to characterize something I say about a hypothetical situation?

**QUESTION:** Are we going to give them any security guarantees?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** They have been given security assurances in the past.

**QUESTION:** What are those?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** They had an agreement with the South Koreans in 1991. They had the Agreed Framework. President Clinton and Dr. Albright in the course of the '90s, put out communiqués and other statements that essentially talked about this issue. Now, they still are saying they need security guarantees. Well, we will see what we will see when we go forward.

**QUESTION:** Can I ask one other bureaucratic question? A former Secretary of State told me some years ago, long before you came in, that one of the problems regarding the alleged "Arabist tilt" to the building is that you have got all of the ambassadors you have got over there from Arab countries.

You have got one that goes to Israel. He is often a political appointee, doesn't go off the track. What you have is, as all of the ambassadors naturally know more, at least, about the countries they have served and fill up the upper reaches of the building. It tends to have an imbalance, at least in knowledge and connections, if not in attitude; and then that was sort of a structural challenge to keep the balance between Arabist, Israeli, and pure American folks we all think should be the policy.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, I think you wrote the column on that, didn't you?

**QUESTION:** I did once, right.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** And I was curious -- and I was trying to find who actually knows about this stuff. (Laughter.)

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I was trying to figure out what I'd -- let's say it was true, what do I do? Either I send 22 ambassadors to Israel --

**QUESTION:** No, I understand.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Or -- (laughter.) No, but frankly, until I read that, it had not occurred to me that way because getting to know them all over a long period of time, I find them as a group very knowledgeable and skilled about both Israel and the Arab lands, so much so that you can take a Dan Kurtzer -- where was Dan before?

**QUESTION:** Egypt.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** In Egypt. Here we have an Orthodox Jew. Dan is an Orthodox Jew, and he was our Ambassador in Egypt, and we moved him from Egypt to Israel. Ed Djerejian was Ambassador to Syria and Israel. So what I have found is that these are exceptionally skilled and qualified people who know the region so well that to say that they are all Arabist, and therefore --

**QUESTION:** Well, that would be an overstatement?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, I know, but the implication of the statement in your column, the implication being that, therefore, there would be a tilt, this so-called --

**QUESTION:** It might tend towards a tilt?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, might tend toward a tilt.

**QUESTION:** Not to overstate it.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, not to overstate it -- might tend toward a tilt against the state of Israel. And one of the charges that is occasionally leveled with the State Department is that there is this Arabist mentality, and therefore we do things like press for negotiations and press for roadmaps and things of that nature.

But what I have found in my two-and-a-half years -- and I was a newcomer to this -- as Chairman, we didn't have to worry about this. I didn't have to worry about this. So what I found coming here is that what the bias is, if there is a bias, is we need to try to do something to help these two peoples move forward, so that we are not in constant enmity and the deteriorating situation that we have seen in recent years.

And I think that is been fairly consistent in the Republican administration, Democratic administration, Republican administration. You can't become Secretary of State and look over the world, and especially look over the Middle East and the Gulf, and see the challenges that we have and you know that one of the most important issues facing you is the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and feel that you just can lean back and not try to do something about it.

It is agonizing, painful, disappointing work, as every Secretary of State has discovered over the years, and I am no different. But now we stuck with it, we didn't say the hell with it. The President put a sharp marker down on the 24th of June of last year and said, we will engage and I will engage, but I need new leadership, Palestinian side. Arafat is a failed leader. We said it. It took eight months or so, and we have that leader now in Prime Minister Abbas, who will be here earlier this week, and the President's engaging.

As you saw, you can't simply say we're not going to engage. Who else is there? This goes to your question. Does this make us the policemen of the world? No, it doesn't make us the policemen of the world. But guess where most of the world screams for when they want a cop or need a cop? They come to us.

But if we have -- and this comes back to an earlier discussion -- that is why we want allies and partnerships and friendships because all of us have our consciences touched, our belief in doing the right thing, this American thing we have about helping people. But it is a lot easier to help people if we have a lot of other people with the capacity to help working with us.

So I want to build alliances and partnerships, not because I am just that State Department guy who does this because that is what diplomats do, but because they serve our interests. I think it is great for us to have a NATO alliance, for us to have good relations with the European Union, so that when push comes to shove, and they need us and we need them, we can talk to one another.

Does that mean we won't have a fight ever? This Iraq resolution thing wasn't the first fight I have ever been in with respect to Europe. I have been through them all from the deployment of the Pershings and GLCMs back in the -- he an

old hand, he remembers. It comes along from time to time. I won't repeat my old saw about the French.

We have been married for 227 years and have been in marriage counseling for 227 years, and the marriage is not going away. We mean too much to each other, and disappointments come and disappointments go. Positions change, as we have seen. And I almost never use the term unless I have to use it in a defensive way -- unilateral, multilateral, strategic competitors, strategic partner, I kind of avoid these single word or two word characterizations of very complex relationships that are constantly shifting among nations.

**QUESTION:** So you have invited Dominique --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, I have asked Dominique to come see me.

**QUESTION:** And he has accepted?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Yes, he will accept. We haven't worked on a specific date. I was going to have him here early in the summer, but the schedules didn't work. I talk to him on a regular basis.

**QUESTION:** If the new -- if there is a need for a new resolution on Iraq, would you rather sponsor it, or would you have others do it, and then --

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Haven't reached that point where we would make it -- you know, it is a judgment call at the time that you are getting ready to introduce. If it comes to a resolution, we would try to get as many supporters and co-sponsors as we could, but who would actually do the introducing that is a detail we would work out later.  
[End]

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