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## **Death of Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN Envoy for Iraq**

### **Secretary Colin L. Powell**

Washington, DC  
August 19, 2003

My colleagues at the Department of State and I share the grief and sadness of the United Nations family, and of all those in the international community whose lives were enriched by Sergio Vieira de Mello. He was a consummate professional who devoted his life to helping others, particularly in his decades of distinguished service to the UN. Besides playing a pivotal role in UN humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in such war-torn regions as Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor, he held the important posts of Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and, at the time of his death, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Sergio never shirked the most difficult assignments, including when UN Secretary-General Annan asked him to go to Iraq and take up this unprecedented mission as the Secretary-General's Special Representative. Those who worked closely with him over the long hot weeks of this summer were struck by his sensible, pragmatic approach. Where others saw obstacles or despair, he created options and solutions. In my book, Mr. Vieira de Mello was a hero, who dedicated his life to helping people in danger and in difficulty. His loss is a terrible blow to the international community.

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