

Remarks at Beginning of Bilateral with President of Iraqi Interim Government Ghazi al-Yawer

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Secretary Colin L. Powell

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Madison Hotel

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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, just one word, please, on the UN resolution. What does this mean for the United States, in light of the divisions over the last year-and-a-half?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I'm expecting a very satisfactory vote this afternoon, and indications I received from my French and German colleagues is they'll be voting for it, as well. So I would expect that it will be a very good vote. And I think it shows the international community coming together, again, to support the Iraqi people in their efforts to build a country that rests on the foundation of democracy and freedom and the rights of all. And I think this is a very important development and a very good day for the Iraqi people.

QUESTION: What does this mean for the post-June 30th period, about the role of the international community?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think it makes it clear that the international community is invited to participate in the reconstruction effort, to help with debt relief, to help with additional funding for Iraqi reconstruction efforts. It makes clear what the role of the coalition forces, with respect to the interim Iraqi government. And you will see that the interim Iraqi government is the sovereign: CPA will go away; Ambassador Bremer, having done a brilliant job, will leave; Ambassador Negroponte will be there to represent American interests at the help of the Iraqi interim government. But sovereignty is being returned.

QUESTION: And one last question: what does this mean -- what kind of signal does this send to the insurgents and others who are challenging the United States and --

SECRETARY POWELL: They are now challenging their own leaders. They are now

fighting against the dreams of their own people. The coalition is there to help their government, and they are now attacking their own covenant, and they are attacking their own interests and the interests of their people, and they must be defeated. They cannot be allowed to deny the Iraqi people this hopeful future, and they cannot be allowed to drag them into the past, the terrible past that we got rid of last year when we got rid of Saddam Hussein.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Can you (inaudible) the unanimous vote? What do you think?

SECRETARY POWELL: I'm not a betting man, normally. And I think it's always wise to not predict the future, but in this case I think we're close to unanimity.

Thank you.

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