

Ongoing U.S. Efforts to Assist the People of Iraq

Secretary Colin L. Powell

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SECRETARY POWELL: Well, thank you very much, Chet, for that kind introduction. And you and I do go back a long way together, to the Reagan years. And Dick Solomon also is another dear and close friend of mine; and we also go back to those years together. And as a member of the Board of Directors ex-officio of the Institute of Peace, it is a great pleasure for me to be here as well.

For those of you who didn't get the complete understanding of Chet's reference to The Washington Post story, it was said that I have broken a tradition in that I have not traveled as much as, say, other Secretaries in recent years have. It's a tradition that I do not mind having broken, and part of the reason that the tradition is broken: I do not shop, I don't sightsee that well, I don't hunt animals and there are a lot of other things I don't do, that tends to make my trip shorter than, perhaps, others. (Laughter.)

Nevertheless, I thought it was an interesting and amusing article, and I assure you that what I try to do is be where I'm supposed to be to serve this President and serve the American people. And sometimes that's in Washington, sometimes it's on the road, and this afternoon it is here at the Institute of Peace, a great institution that is doing such terrific work for the American people and for the cause of peace around the world.

As Chet noted, the Institute has been training ministers for the new Iraq government at the deputy ministerial level, and we had a number of them over in the Department, as also Chet noted. And to see these individuals after they have been through this training and you see that spark in their eyes and the enthusiasm that comes out of every pore: they want to get back home, they want to get the job done, they want to put their country on a proper foundation of democracy, they want to make their people proud of them and proud of Iraq all over again. And so I thank you, Chet and Dick and the whole staff here, for the great work that you have been doing to help us in this effort.

The other point Chet made that I have to touch on, because it relates to a radio interview I just gave, and somebody said, well, you're a soldier and so why are you reluctant to use force, as it is claimed, and what is your philosophy about force and diplomacy and peace? And my answer was very, very simple: We should do everything to avoid war. I know a lot about war. I've been in war. I've lost many friends in war. I've sent men and

women to their death. And so I have no love of war and I believe that the obligation of all of us in senior foreign policy positions, and I know it's an obligation that the President of the United States, President Bush, feels deeply, that we should do everything possible to avoid war. But if war comes, then let's do it and let's do it well, and that's what happened in Iraq.

And I will get to Iraq in due course, but I want to set the context first about Iraq and why we are in Iraq and what brought us to this particular point in history. And history really changed on 9/11. There is before 9/11 and after 9/11. That would be one of the defining features, historical features, of this new century that we are now four years into.

On that day, we were struck by an enemy that we knew was out there, but we did not know the enemy had this kind of capability. We were used to the Cold War enemies, those behind the Iron Curtain, the Bamboo Curtain. And suddenly, this new enemy that was not a state but was a terror organization that was residing in a state, that had taken over a state, that had taken over Afghanistan and was being supported by an evil regime called the Taliban, gave sanctuary to the state, the state of terrorism, this new kind of state that was essentially a parasite on an existing state. And the Taliban gave sanctuary to terrorism and they struck us, and we realized that we had to strike back and we had to strike back immediately before it happened again.

And so, in a relatively short period of time, forces were assembled. The Taliban was given the opportunity to turn over these individuals. They did not and the President resolutely acted. And we also gathered allies in this effort. We asked our Pakistani friends to make a strategic choice, which they did within just a few days after 9/11, and they joined in the effort, turned their back on the Taliban. And here it is now, three years almost after those days, and we see an Afghanistan that is slowly putting itself on a firm foundation of democracy.

Yes, it has challenges. Yes, there will be difficulties in reining in the warlords, in getting rid of the remaining elements of the Taliban, but at the same time, people are believing in their country again. Seven million Afghans have registered to vote in an election for President that will be held in early October, and then some months later, an election for a new parliament.

So this glass is more than half full, it's a lot more than half full. The challenge is security. The challenge is getting rid of these remnants in Afghanistan. We can be proud of what we have done there. We can be proud of the new relationship we have created in South Asia with Pakistan, with Afghanistan, with the other "stans" in that part of the world that used to be on the other side of the Iron Curtain are now working with us, cooperating with us.

The relationship we have been able to develop with India at the same time that we have developed a new relationship with Pakistan. They no longer see India and Pakistan in one -- down one lens, but we look at them as two proud nations we're working with

individually, and because we respect them individually we can help them work together as they solve mutual problems.

We have seen so many other things happen during this three-year period. We have seen how the world has come together to recognize that terrorism has to be defeated, that it is a threat to all civilized nations and all civilized nations must come together and cooperate with intelligence exchange, cooperate with law enforcement activities, cooperate in every way imaginable to go after this threat to the entire civilized world.

And President Bush laid this out clearly within a week or two of 9/11, that this would be a long struggle, a difficult campaign that will go on for a long time, and we have to ready ourselves for this challenge, we have to have patience and determination to defeat this new kind of enemy. And we have that patience, we have that determination. And the President has lost none of his commitment to making sure that we keep ourselves safe, we defeat terrorism, and we do everything we can to help people around the world deal with the challenge of terrorism and the related challenge of weapons of mass destruction.

So you have seen us work hard to contain the Iranian nuclear weapons development program. We have engaged all of our friends in that part of Asia that have an interest in what's going on in North Korea to put together the six-party framework that is going to deal with that problem in due course.

All of the members of the six-party group, to include North Korea, acknowledge that the Peninsula has to be denuclearized. And now we're working out how we go about making that happen in a way that leaves that part of Asia secure, the world more secure, and North Korea without nuclear weapons, but with a new start, and hopefully, helping the people of North Korea to a better future than the future they are now enduring, enjoying and enduring.

The Libyan situation, where, through diplomacy, we have been able to cause a nation to decide this isn't worth a candle. And some of the statements that Mr. Qadhafi made after he decided to give up these weapons were rather incredible. "I spent all this time, all this money, trying to make myself more secure with these kinds of weapons, and instead, I made Libya less secure, so let's get rid of them." It's an example I hope other nations in the world will be following.

So our strategy has been rather clear for these last three years and will continue in the same vein, to make sure that we defend the peace. We defend the peace by going after terrorists where they are. We defend the nation by putting in place the right kind of security on our borders, but at the same time, making sure that we remain a welcoming nation. And every day, we try to find that right balance between securing ourselves and making sure we remain a welcoming nation to the whole world.

We protect the peace by entering into arrangements with other nations, by reaching out

to our European colleagues, our Asian colleagues, with all the multinational and multilateral organizations that the United States is a part of; always looking for diplomatic ways to solve these problems, but always recognizing that, if diplomacy doesn't do it, then to protect our nation and to protect the values we believe in, to protect our friends, to protect the peace, to defend the peace, it may be necessary to use military force; and if we have to, do it, do it well, and then get on to the business of rebuilding, get on to the business of protecting a new democracy, protecting the peace again.

The President is absolutely determined that we will see the same kind of results in Iraq, defending the peace, protecting the peace and extending the peace -- extending the peace, resting on a solid foundation of democracy and human rights and human freedom, all the values we believe in, and it will happen in Iraq.

As President Bush has put it, our goal in Iraq is not only to defeat an enemy, it is to give strength to a friend, a free representative government that serves its people and fights on their behalf. And the sooner the goal is achieved, the sooner our job will be done.

President Bush and the other leaders of the coalition promised to liberate Iraq, promised to end a dangerous, evil regime, and promised to restore sovereign self-rule to the Iraqi people. We kept our promises. It is now almost three weeks since the end of the occupation, since Jerry Bremer closed the books on the CPA, after doing a terrific job, and left the country. And he was replaced, not by Ambassador John Negroponte, but he was replaced by the new Iraqi interim government under the leadership of Prime Minister Allawi.

The Iraqi people now have new leaders and new opportunities to shape their own destiny in the way that they see fit. And we have Ambassador Negroponte there, as an ambassador, as you all are well familiar the role of an ambassador. He is there to help them. So the last three weeks, you have seen the new leaders of Iraq out on television. You have seen them making decisions. You have seen them showing leadership. You have seen them working hard to defeat this insurgency, to work with the United States and all of the other friends that Iraq has, to make this a nation that all can be proud of.

The Iraqi interim government, led by President Al-Yawer and Prime Minister Allawi have really gotten off to a good start. To borrow some language from America's own early efforts to establish a democracy, Iraq has already taken crucial first steps to form a more perfect union, to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and all of those other values that you all know so well as part of our heritage.

Iraq is now a country that will be ruled by law, not by force. The new Iraqi interim government derives its authority from the Transitional Administrative Law that was written by Iraqis with our assistance, promulgated by us, but essentially an administrative law that they will be using as they go into this next phase of getting ready for elections, and ultimately, the writing of a constitution next year.

But this administrative law is a revolutionary document for this part of the world. It talks about human rights. It talks about the rights of women. It talks about a representative form of government. It talks about civilian control of the military. It talks about an independent judiciary -- all the values that we believe are important and we believe are universal, not just unique to the United States of America or to Western democracies. Why shouldn't the people of Iraq -- Sunnis, Shia, Kurds and all the other representative groups or groups represented in Iraq -- have that same kind of basic rule of law, basic foundation of openness, democracy and the respect for individuals?

And so this is what is guiding the new interim government as it moves forward. Iraq's 26 governmental ministries are now functioning under Iraqi leadership, with assistance from the coalition members that are there, with assistance from advisors and with a great deal of American taxpayer resources available to them. But they are making the decisions. They are the ones who are now reaching out throughout their communities, reaching out throughout the country to get the job done.

We also are seeing local governing councils come alive. We are seeing PTA organizations come alive. We are seeing women play a greater role in the life of Iraq. All of these things are now starting to bubble as people realize they have their own leaders in charge, they are sovereign, and the Americans are there as friends and supporters, with so many other nations as well.

The interim government is well along in planning for a national conference that will be held later this month. We hope it will be on schedule toward the third or fourth week of the month. It will be a broad-gauged and broad-based political gathering. And the conference will constitute the first opportunity after the transfer of sovereignty for Iraqis from all over the country, representing every part of civil society, to come together and discuss national issues, and to give their one-month stamp of understanding and approval to the interim government.

The national conference will start out by selecting an interim national council of 100 diverse and distinguished leaders that will serve as part of the government and provide advice and legislative oversight over the next six months of this government's existence.

The United Nations and an independent election commission of the Iraqi interim government already have begun work for the fair and open election of a transitional national assembly that we expect to be accomplished, and by the UN resolution must be accomplished, by the end of January 2005.

And so this interim Iraqi government that we're looking at now is a caretaker government. It has a Transitional Administrative Law, it is up and running, it's functioning, but its principal job is to get ready for the elections, prepare the country for the elections that will be held producing a transitional national assembly which will select a transitional administration taking the country through 2005, the writing of a constitution, and then final elections toward the end of 2005, a permanent constitution that will derive

from the administrative law, that will reflect the views of all of the elements of civil society in Iraq.

The majority Shia population will be certainly represented in this constitution and will have great influence, but it will be a constitution, I'm confident, because of what we saw in the writing of the administrative law, that will protect the rights of the minority, make sure that everybody has a voice in the government and everybody is represented in the government.

The United States has promised, made a solemn commitment, that we will do everything we can to help the Iraqis keep their transition to full democracy on the calendar track that I just described, and we will fulfill that promise.

A key function of any government is the administration of justice to make sure that justice is seen as free and open and resting on a body of law, and the Iraqi interim government is certainly committed to this and is carrying out its sovereign responsibility. Indeed, it is the interim government that was the driving force for ensuring that Saddam Hussein, as quickly as possible, was transferred from CPA and U.S. legal custody to the Iraqi interim government so they could demonstrate to their people that they were as interested in justice as we were. Even though these individuals are still held under our physical custody, legal custody has been passed and they will be held fully accountable for their crimes.

Prime Minister Allawi's government has taken every steps -- every step necessary to begin the legal process for Iraqi justice to be meted out to these individuals. The crimes that Saddam Hussein stands accused of are of the worst kind, heinous: filling mass graves, gassing people with weapons of mass destruction. I visited the town up in the north, Halabja, where this actually happened, and I saw the graves of the people who were gassed, 5,000 of them, on an April morning in 1988.

This is no figment of anyone's imagination; it is historic fact, and he will be held to account for these kinds of crimes: for all the mass graves that are still being uncovered all over Iraq, for the rape rooms and for the other terrible things that happened to this society that happened to this country that was such a successful, functioning country just 30 years ago, with one of the highest per capita incomes and GDPs in that part of the world, all run into the ground by this individual and by this regime that truly was evil; and he and the thugs who worked along with him, who are now in custody, will be dealt with. It will be dealt with through a means that will be new to this part of the world and new to this country: fair, open trials, which will once again establish the rule of law for all Iraqis to see.

Setting the precedent of openness and fairness is crucial in a country like this where for over three decades the law was a gun and a mass grave. Another fundamental function of government, and especially this new government, is providing for the common defense. The brave Iraqi men and women who risk their lives every day to serve in the

interim government need no reminding that security is Iraq's foremost biggest challenge today.

We are saddened by the loss of every life: American life or coalition member life or Iraqi life. A governor in one of the northern provinces was killed within the last two days. Another deputy minister was killed a few days ago. Policemen are losing their lives in these explosions. Average citizens are being killed by these suicide bombers. And yet Iraqis are still stepping forward in order to serve their country, to come to the Institute of Peace for training, knowing that they will be identified as having been here, but they're going back to do the job.

Iraqis are still stepping forward to join the armed forces. They are stepping forward to act in the interest of their countrymen and to do everything they can to replace the United States Armed Forces and the other coalition forces. They want us to leave. We want to leave. They want to be responsible for their own country. And we're going to do everything we can in the weeks and months ahead to make sure that the Iraqi military and Iraqi police forces and border police and all of the other military and paramilitary and police elements needed in a functioning government are built up as quickly as possible so that they can take over responsibility for their country.

That's what they want. Iraqis are uniting. They're coming together under this interim government. Throughout Iraq, courageous citizens are taking risks at all level, taking positions at all level to serve their countries in every capacity that you can imagine. They're being attacked. They're being attacked by these former regime elements. They're being attacked by terrorists who have come into the country to make trouble. But there are 25 million people in Iraq and there are only some several thousand -- we don't know the exact number, but it's in the thousands -- and they are denying the people of Iraq this hopeful future.

They are making it difficult for us to achieve what the Iraqi people want: peace and freedom; the ability to raise their children in peace; to use the treasure of the land, the oil that they have, in order to build hospitals and schools and not weapons of mass destruction or to threaten neighbors. That's all they want. And they're being denied this for the moment by these terrorists and by these former regime elements.

Well, they will not be denied forever because these individuals will be defeated. They will be defeated by the proud men and women in the United States Armed Forces and our coalition partners and they'll ultimately be defeated by the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police force. They're taking shape now, getting better and better with each day in order to be able to deal with the security threat.

Just imagine where we would be if we could deal with this immediately. Instead of the kind of daily scenes you see of bombings, of the criticism directed toward the effort, people would be congratulating us because they would see what we are getting ready to do and what is going to happen in Iraq, with the reconstruction effort, with the building of

a democratic system and with the desire of the Iraqi people to live in peace and freedom. These outside terrorists will be defeated. The former regime elements also will be defeated.

I saw earlier today on television Iraqis demonstrating for peace, demonstrating against Saddam Hussein. And by demonstrating against Saddam Hussein, demonstrating against those who would deny them this better future, who would work against this better future. And we have to stay strong. With the Iraqis, who are now stepping forward. We have to make sure that they know that we will not falter, we will not wilt, we will have no second thoughts about the commitment we have made to these people, that we have made to this country.

Iraqis are now openly speaking out against this hatred. They are openly speaking out against those who would set off suicide bombs. And the new leaders of Iraq are determined to prevent the terrorists from achieving their destructive aims.

We and our partners respect that spirit of resolve that is now coming out of the Iraqi people, and they will not stand alone. We are proud of the contributions that our coalition partners have made. Some 31 nations are in the coalition. There are some nations who have felt it necessary, for one reason or another, to not extend their troops again or to withdraw. But the fact of the matter is, we are blessed with coalition partners, just to name two, South Korea and Bulgaria, who are not blinking, who are not faltering, even though they are being tested mightily by kidnappings and by beheadings, which shows you, once again, the nature of the people we are fighting and why they must be defeated. This kind of action cannot be allowed to succeed anywhere in the 21st century, and above all, not in Iraq. And bowing to this kind of kidnapping threat only encourages it and only makes it more difficult.

In these difficult times, we have to remain steadfast. And we're so proud that the coalition partners that we have, almost all of them, are remaining steadfast.

The new Iraqi government is also now taking the lead and is committed to the modernization of Iraq's economy and establishing the institutions that will significantly raise the standard of living for all Iraqis. Notwithstanding the periodic attacks on the pipelines, the average daily oil production and exports through the ports of oil are at pre-war levels and are rising. But just imagine what these people are doing who hit the pipelines. Essentially destroying the wealth of the people of Iraq for their own evil purposes, and they can't be allowed to be successful. Daily, electricity megawatt-hours is stabilizing, near pre-war levels, at pre-war levels, and will be increasing significantly in the months ahead. The pace of reconstruction spending on the part of the U.S. Government agencies in Iraq is being stepped up. It was an \$18 billion supplemental. If you add in the other money that had been made available, some \$21 billion is available for reconstruction efforts in Iraq. So far, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$8 billion has been committed.

We are through all of the startup processes we had to go through, and you will rapidly see that obligation rate go up as we use this money that has been generously given by the American people to help Iraq rebuild its infrastructure: put schools up; put hospitals up; make sure that people are being educated and trained; make sure that the infrastructure, particularly the electric infrastructure, the sanitary system, the electricity and oil infrastructure, is all built up so that the Iraqi people can stand on their own two feet. They don't want to be in the dole. They want to do it themselves. We're working hard to get their debt level reduced and we're pleased that a number of the nations that hold debt have made commitments to significant reductions in Iraqi debt.

Over 8 million textbooks have been distributed around the country. We know that these youngsters need the education, the right kind of education, that they had been denied for so many years.

So the interim government has made top priority economic reform that will result in job creation. We need to create jobs with the money we have and with the policies they adopt, so that we can get disaffected young men off the streets working, earning enough money to go home proudly and support a family, so they don't get pulled down the wrong path of death and destruction, and defeating their own hopes and dreams, the hopes and dreams of their own children.

The question that always comes up, of course, is: Did we do the right thing? When you look back and you see how we got where we are, did we do the right thing, and the answer is: Yes, we did the right thing. We are on a roll now, I believe, with the transfer of sovereignty. I think that with this transfer of sovereignty and with the actions that the new interim government has been taking -- have been, those actions are going to move us in the right direction.

The big challenge now, of course, is security and I've already touched on that. But when you look at what has been removed, this awful regime, and that's what it was, the President of the United States went to the United Nations and said to the United Nations: For 12 years, this regime has been ignoring your resolutions, ignoring orders of the international community. For 12 years, we have demanded answers about weapons of mass destruction. For 12 years, we have got incomplete answers. We have got dissembling. We have gotten outright lies. How much longer is this to continue?

He didn't take that case anywhere but the place it should have been taken -- to the United Nations -- and I was proud to have recommended to him that we had to take the case, first and foremost, to the offended party, the international community, the United Nations.

We also pointed out the terrorist activity that Iraq was involved in, the human rights abuses that were taking place in that country. The case with respect to weapons of mass destruction is a case that was believed in by the previous administration; it was the basis upon which President Clinton bombed Iraq in 1998. It's the case that our international

colleagues believed in. It was an accurate case. It was a case I believed in when I took it to the United Nations on the 5th of February 2003.

Now, a year later, we know that there were some errors in that case, but there was no error in the fact -- it has now been substantiated by the Senate Select Committee and by Lord Butler yesterday -- that Saddam Hussein had never given up the intention of having usable weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein had made sure that he had protected the infrastructure through dual-use capabilities, to keeping the intellectual brainpower together, and that he fully was able to restart any weapons of mass destruction facility that he felt he should restart. And anybody who thought he had given up that intention was absolutely wrong. We were right.

Where we were not right, at least we can't establish whether we were right or how wrong we were, was the actual existence of stockpiles. But every analysis that we made, the intelligence information that was provided to the President, that was provided to the members of Congress before they voted on the resolution that they voted on in the fall of 2002, the intelligence information that was available to the previous administration and that was concurred in by intelligence organizations around the world, suggested that there were active, usable stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons certainly, and the capacity to rapidly bring online biological weapons, and there were efforts underway to begin restarting at some point a nuclear weapons program.

It was solid information. It turned out that it was not as solid as we thought it was, and we are still trying to find out why we had misinformation, why we did not understand that some of the sourcing of this intelligence was incorrect. And we should continue the investigations that are underway. But I can say to you that based on what we had from the intelligence community at the time that the National Intelligence Estimate was written, at the time that this material was presented to the American Congress, at the time that the President and all of his advisors were using this information, and the time that I used to get ready for my UN presentation and my UN presentation, it was the best information we had available and it was put together by hard-working analysts in all of our intelligence communities who came together and believed that it was accurate and reflected reality and it was a sound basis upon which to make a decision.

And as we have all said and the President has especially said, it would have been irresponsible not to have made a decision to deal with this problem while it was still a problem there and not a problem here. And so the President made the right decision, along with Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Howard and Prime Minister Berlusconi and President Kwasniewski of Poland and the Prime Minister of Poland and so many other leaders who recognized this danger and felt that action was required.

The action was taken. A terrible regime is gone, never to come back again, and now the challenge before us is not to get faint, not to let the problems we're having in security now deterring us from our real purpose, and that is to bring democracy to this part of the world, thereby fundamentally changing this part of the world, fundamentally reshaping history for the 21st century.

And it is all consistent with the President's goal, the President's goals that he set, as he set out at the post-9/11 presentations that he made, the President's goals that he reiterated again the other day in Oak Ridge when he talked about defending peace and protecting peace and extending peace.

And it is not just what we're doing in Iraq. It's what we're doing in other parts of the Middle East, the broader Middle East and North Africa. What we're doing in other parts of the world. The President talks about rebuilding Iraq, but he also talks about making sure that we have a Middle East free trade agreement eventually, free trade agreements with Jordan and other countries in that part of the world, extending free trade across the entire Middle East. He talks about it when he talks about reform; Reform not for the purpose of imposing an American system on anyone, reform because reform is needed and the nations in that part of the world know they need reform. They know they need modernization. Each one will have to determine their own path and their own pace that they will travel along that path, because each country has a different history, a different culture, a different expectation.

But what we can do, in the United States and the other industrialized nations of the world is to help them, stand ready to help friends who want to be helped. And as they reach their hand out and say, "Come, let's work together," the United States will be there to say, "We're here, we want to work with you, we want to help you." That's what we are all about.

And so that is the part about extending the peace. Extending the peace is the ultimate goal of the President's policies. Sometimes we extend the peace by using war. More often than not, we extend the peace by working with international organizations and friends and neighbors, by making NATO a larger alliance, an alliance that, 12 years ago, people said should go away, the Cold War went away, you don't need NATO. But what we found was all the nations that used to be behind the Iron Curtain want to be part of this great transatlantic alliance.

We extend the peace by working with our European Union friends as they expand in size and take on new responsibilities, such as providing forces to protect the peace in Macedonia. We extend the peace and we defend the peace when we work with our friends in Asia in order to find a solution to the problem of nuclear weapons in North Korea.

We defend the peace and extend the peace and we work with our friends in South Asia. Two years ago, I was worried to death that we might see a major war break out between India and Pakistan. The United States got deeply engaged, along with other members of the international community, working with the Pakistanis and the Indians. And now we see them working together, having meetings amongst themselves, having soccer matches with each other, working on issues that would have been too difficult to even imagine just a year and a half, two years ago. That's part of our policy of defending the

peace and extending the peace throughout the world.

The President will not step back from the challenge that has been presented to us by terrorism and by terrorists. We will use all the elements of national power: use our military when it's necessary; or often use our law enforcement and intelligence assets; and more often than that, use our diplomatic efforts and our political efforts, work with the partners and friends that we have around the world; but above all, use the value system that is still respected around the world, a value system that has fueled this nation for so many hundreds of years and is fueling so many other nations around the world, a value system that says democracy works and it is not restricted to western cultures or to the United States.

Individual human rights are universal; they are not U.S. or Western values. Market economics works. That's why free trade agreements are important, that's why WTO progress is important, that's why the Millennium Challenge Account that we are using now to invest in those countries that are committed to democracy is so important.

The President is determined to do just what he said: to protect the peace, defend the peace, and extend that peace, extend the blessings of democracy and respect for human rights to nations throughout the world. This is a noble purpose and we should be proud that we are the nation that history and destiny has called upon to lead this campaign to achieve this noble purpose.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

USIP Q&A Portion:

MR. CROCKER: I believe we have a microphone over on that side of the room, and I would just ask people to make a brief identification of their affiliation, and the Secretary will recognize you.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. My name is Najmaldin Karim, I'm President of the Washington Kurdish Institute.

This is an American you don't have to convince that Saddam had to be -- getting rid of Saddam Hussein. My comment and a question I have is: Election is going to be held within the next six months in Iraq, and some of us who work closely with the situation there and work with the leadership and the grassroots levels are very much concerned about what these elections can lead to.

Today, at least from what we know, if elections are held, probably the results are very obvious who is going to win. At best, we will end up with a regime like Iran, and if we're

lucky, we get Khatami's side of the regime; and if we're unlucky, we will get Khamenei's side of regime; and in the Sunni areas, we may end up with another Bashar.

What is your thinking about this? And this is because this is a real possibility and has occurred from there. We're very much concerned about a result like this because majority rule to them means majority rule without any regard to other situations, such as right of the people in Kurdistan and others.

Thank you.

SECRETARY POWELL: We are very sensitive to this, and especially to the anxieties that exist in the Kurdish community. We have worked very closely with Ms. Pirelli of the United Nations, as she has put together a plan for the elections. We will make sure through our presence, and I think the influence we have with the interim government, and the interim government knows that if they do not put together an election that is seen as fair, open and representative of all the interests of the people, then it will not enjoy the international support that it needs and it will be on a path to failure not a path to success. At the same time, Shia are the major population group in Iraq, and if we're going to have a free, open, fair election, that will be the major population group.

With the Transitional Administrative Law and the work that's going on with the constitution and the discussions that have been held, I think so far we have reason to be optimistic that it will be possible to put in place a government and a national assembly that may well have a Shia majority but there will be enough checks and balances and protections built in through the administrative law, through the commitment of the leaders -- and then the government, as you know, is pretty representative of all of the parties in Iraq -- that will be able to put together a system that will respect the rights of all and make sure that no minority voice is lost and there will be no tyranny of a majority.

QUESTION: Aly Abuzakuk, the Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa at the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy. I'm a Libyan-American. And I was so pleased that you have succeeded with Qadhafi to take away the weapons of mass destruction. But the Libyan people are still looking forward and aspiring for having the reform that will benefit them, democracy, the rule of law and the respect for the human rights there.

Until today, the initiative, the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the President Initiative for Democracy and Reform, are at stake. We need to make some successes. And I hope that Iraq will be a success. But we also need to make successes in places like Libya so that we will not be looked at as if we are only caring for weapons of mass destruction.

As a matter of fact, there is a small joke that Baradei said when he went there, he didn't find weapons of mass destruction but he found total destruction. So please comment on that.

Thank you.

SECRETARY POWELL: We have no illusions about Colonel Qadhafi or the nature of his regime, but to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction was a start and it allows us now to engage in many other ways. I have to make sure that it is the total foreswearance of terrorist activity and so it's a start. We now have diplomatic relations with Libya. We can interact with Libyans in new ways that were not possible just a few months ago and a process has begun. I can't tell you how fast things will unfold, but we have not gone into this with our eyes closed, but with our eyes wide open, fully cognizant of the nature of the regime, its non-democratic totalitarian nature, and we will approach it in that light.

We are going to be working with each of the nations in the region in that light, as I said earlier, recognizing that each of them is different. There is no one model for all of them. And of course, as part of our strategy of dealing with all of these nations, we are not in any way neglecting biggest challenge and problem in that part of the world, and that is to find a solution to the crisis between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The President has been clear about this. His speech of 24 June 2002 remains our policy. We are supporting this effort on the part of Prime Minister Sharon to disengage from all the settlements in Gaza and begin disengagement in the West Bank. And we're working with all the parties in the region. We had a delegation over there over there earlier this week, and I'm working with the members of the Quartet, so we have not forgotten that challenge, either.

People have said to me, "Well, you know, you've got an election year coming up so you're not going to put much interest in this." My guidance from the President was absolutely clear: You keep working all of these; I'll worry about the election. Powell, you worry about all of these things which are of importance to the world and importance to the American people.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, Toby Gati.

SECRETARY POWELL: Hey, Toby, how are you?

QUESTION: I speak to you as a former secretary of INR.

SECRETARY POWELL: It's like old home week here.

QUESTION: Right. (Laughter.) And from the bureau that I would hope told it like it is, and I want to thank you for giving them the opportunity to do that, and hopefully, making your job better and easier.

But I really want to speak to you in that vein as an analyst. Hearing you were coming, I pulled out your book, *My American Journey*, which I think is one of the best books about America, not just about foreign policy, that's been written. And I turned to the pages on the first Gulf War. And I know you know what you said, but I brought the book. And you said -- (laughter) --

SECRETARY POWELL: It's a bad assumption. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I know, I know. I guess that's one of the things about freedom of the press, right?

SECRETARY POWELL: I keep meaning to read it again. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: "It's not in our interest to destroy a weakened Iraq," you quote someone, and you say occupation -- "It would have required U.S. conquest and occupation. I don't think that's what the American people signed up for. Iraq remains weak and isolated, kept in check by UN inspectors, not a bad bottom line." And finally, "I'm relieved I don't have to say to many more parents, 'I'm sorry your son or daughter died in the siege of Baghdad.'"

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: You know, many people still feel that way about this war. And I wonder -- history's not inoperative because of 9/11. How do you reconcile the two wars?

SECRETARY POWELL: In Gulf War I, we went in for a specific purpose, mandated by the UN, and that was to remove the Iraqi army from Kuwait. There are many people who have written many articles and stories about we should have gone to Baghdad, why didn't we go to Baghdad. We were never going to Baghdad. There was no plan to go to Baghdad. There was no political mandate to go to Baghdad. There was no political mandate to change the regime, at any level, not in the UN, not in the White House, not in the Pentagon, nowhere. So we were never going to Baghdad, no matter how easy it might have been.

The specific mission at that time was to kick the Iraqi army out and restore the Government of Kuwait and to bring the Iraqi army down to a position where it did not present the same kind threat in the future. All that was accomplished.

We believed at that time that it would not have made any sense and it was not in the political environment at that time to actually take over Iraq or go to Baghdad. It was our hope and, you know, we couldn't be sure of it, but it was our hope and it was something of an expectation that, in light of the loss, the regime would change or come apart or Saddam Hussein would go. That turned out not to be the case; he had staying power. He had the tools of a totalitarian state which kept him in power. And as the years went by --

and that book was written in 1995 -- as the years went by, the sanctions were in place, he was still contained, and he never really rebuilt his army to the point where it presented the same kind of threat that it did in 1990.

But from 1995 to 1998, there was every bit of evidence available to the administration that he was reconstituting. That led President Clinton in 1998, for good reason, as presented to President Clinton, based on the intelligence, that same intelligence base that we're all using, that said there was a reconstitution of weapons of mass destruction. And Operation Desert Fox was designed to deal with that threat, as President Clinton had it presented to him by the intelligence community, and I respect his willingness to make that bold decision. And they bombed for that four-day period of time, and the reports were that they thought they had taken out a lot of what they believe was the reconstituted capability.

In the aftermath of that, though, Saddam was able to get the inspectors to remove themselves. So from '98 on, there was nobody on the ground in the form of UN inspectors. And when this administration came in, in early 2001, we were faced with a regime that had been unwatched for these years, had demonstrated that notwithstanding all of the UN resolutions that had piled up from '91 and from '95 on, that they were not going to cooperate with the UN. They were shooting at our airplanes every day as we went over the no-fly zone. They were doing everything they could to break out of sanctions, and the whole sanctions regime was in danger of falling apart.

My first job for a year or so as Secretary of State was to reinforce those sanction regimes and put in place smart sanctions. And finally, as 2002 came upon us and the aftermath of 9/11, we started to look at Iraq at a far more serious -- as a far more serious danger. If they were at the business of reconstituting and had stockpiles, as we were being told, and in light of what happened in 9/11, in light of what happened in Afghanistan, as we went through 2002, the President said we have to think about dealing with this problem.

And that's exactly what we did. And it was in the late summer in August when we were considering the problem again and we were looking at what to do, when we all decided -- I started the recommendation rolling, but everybody agreed, everybody in the Administration agreed that the President should take the case to the United Nations. The President agreed, certainly, and that's what he did. He said, this problem is lingering, it's been there for all these years, and we have seen clearly that he is not going to go away by his own volition and he is hiding. He is not telling us the truth. Let's take it to the UN. We got Resolution 1441, asked for an honest declaration, which we did not get, nobody would admit, nobody -- not Dr. Eilbaradei, not Dr. Blix will say we got an honest declaration. And that was the first test we gave to the Iraqis in that resolution and they flunked the test.

And then as the months went by, the President came to the conclusion, as we all did, that the diplomatic track was not taking us to a solution to this problem, and, in fact, might take us to a position where the international consensus would break down, nothing would happen, and he would be free to reconstitute, do whatever he wanted to do, build

up the stockpiles we thought he had and we hadn't found, and the Iraqi Survey Group is continuing to look at that.

And the President, in coordination with like-minded leaders around the world, decided that this was a chance, in a post-9/11 period, that he would not take. He could not do it for the safety of the American people, he could not do it for the safety of the world, and as part of his desire to defend, protect, and extend the peace.

And so he decided that if the UN wouldn't act, then a likeminded coalition would act. We did act and he acted with the full support of all of his advisors and with the support of all of those coalition leaders.

QUESTION: It's a great book. I hope you write another one sometime.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, one more.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you, Toby.

QUESTION: Mahmoud Fundi, Senior Fellow, U.S. Institute of Peace, and I'm working on Arab media and I have one question for you.

You have a great success story in Iraq. You defeated terrorism in many ways. But until today, you have not addressed the issue of the Shiite leaders of terrorism in the region that's making al-Qaida look cool in the eyes of the young in the Arab world.

And one main tool of Shiite-leading terrorism is Al-Jazeera channel. And that Al-Jazeera is accountable to only one man, and that's the Amir of Qatar, where \$130 million comes from a line item in his budget in the Diwani Amir, every year for Al-Jazeera. Why doesn't America put its foot down and tell his to cease and desist from putting al-Zarqawi as the role model every day for the Arabs? And I'm not talking about freedom of expression and freedom of media here, because this is not media, this is really a tool of recruitment for bin Laden and al-Qaida. Thank you.

SECRETARY POWELL: I can assure there have been many, many discussions with Qatari leaders and we have made it clear that we do not want to suppress the media. We are not trying to control the media. But when a particular outlet, Al-Jazeera, does such a horrible job of presenting the news, and when it takes every opportunity to slant the news, present it in the most outrageous way, and when it will do such things as put on videotape that it has received from terrorists, and put it on for the purpose of inflaming the world and appealing to the basest instincts in the region, then we have to speak out, and we have.

And I think in recent weeks, you have seen some steps on the part of Al-Jazeera to bring in people to give it advice with respect to its editorial policies and with respect to how it's doing its job and I'm pleased to see that. And within the past few days, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Allawi, has had very direct conversations with the leadership of Al Jazeera, not for the purpose of controlling the press, but for the purpose of saying, "Do you understand what you're doing to the hopes and dreams of the Iraqi people when you encourage this kind of thing and when you wallow in it?"

And so I hope that all those responsible for what goes on in Al Jazeera are listening carefully and watching carefully and I hope that we will see changes in the way in which Al Jazeera and other similar networks do their business.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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