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Remarks to the United Nations Security Council

Secretary Colin L. Powell

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(12:00 p.m. EST)

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. President and Mr. Secretary General, distinguished colleagues. Mr. President, let me join my colleagues in congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency, and I know you will lead us in these difficult days with great distinction. And let me also express to my German colleagues my thanks and admiration for the stewardship that they provided to the Council over the past month.

We meet today, it seems to me, with one question, and one very, very important question before us: Has the Iraqi regime made the fundamental strategic and political decision to comply with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and to rid itself of all of its weapons of mass destruction, all of the infrastructure for the development of weapons of mass destruction? It's a question of intent on the part of the Iraqi leadership.

The answer to that question does not come from how many inspectors are present, or how much more time should be given, or how much more effort should be put into the inspection process. It's not a question of how many unanswered clusters of questions are there, or are there more benchmarks that are needed, or are they enough unresolved issues that have been put forward to be examined and analyzed and conclusions reached about. The answer depends entirely on whether Iraq has made the choice to actively cooperate in every possible way, in every possible manner, in the immediate and complete disarmament of itself of its prohibited weapons. That's what 1441 called for.

I would like to thank Dr. Blix and Dr. ElBaradei for their reports this morning which shed more light on this difficult question. I listened to them very carefully. I listened to them very, very carefully to see if I was hearing that, finally, Iraq had reached that point where it understood that the will of the international community must now be obeyed.

I was pleased to hear from both of these distinguished gentlemen that there has been some continuing progress on process and even some new activity with respect to substance.

But I was sorry to learn that all of this still is coming in a grudging manner, that Iraq is still refusing to offer what was called for by 1441: immediate, active, and unconditional cooperation. Not later, immediate. Not passive, active. Not conditional, unconditional in every respect.

Unfortunately, in my judgment, despite some of the progress that has been mentioned, I still find what I have heard this morning, a catalog still of non-cooperation. If Iraq genuinely wanted to disarm, we would not have to be worrying about setting up means of looking for mobile biological units or any

units of that kind. They would be presented to us. We would not need an extensive program to search for and look for underground facilities that we know exist. The very fact that we must make these requests seems to me to show that Iraq is still not cooperating.

The inspectors should not have to look under every rock, go to every crossroad, peer into every cave for evidence, for proof. And we must not allow Iraq to shift the burden of proof onto the inspectors. Nor can we return to the failed bargain of Resolution 1284, which offered partial relief for partial disclosure. 1441 requires full and immediate compliance and we must hold Iraq to its terms.

We also heard this morning of an acceleration of Iraqi initiatives. I don't know if we should call these things initiatives. Whatever they are, Iraq's small steps are certainly not initiatives. They are not something that came forward willingly, freely, from the Iraqis. They have been pulled out or have been pressed out by the possibility of military force by the political will of the Secretary Council.

They have been taking these initiatives, if that's what some would choose to call them, only grudgingly, rarely unconditionally, and primarily under the threat of force.

We are told that these actions do not constitute immediate cooperation, but that's exactly what is demanded by 1441. And even then, progress is often more apparent than real. I am pleased, very pleased, that some al-Samoud II missiles are now being broken up, although perhaps the process of breaking them up has now paused for a moment.

And I know these are not toothpicks, but real missiles. But the problem was we don't know how many missiles there are, how many toothpicks there are. We don't know whether or not the infrastructure to make more has been identified and broken up. And we have evidence that shows that the infrastructure to make more missiles continues to remain within Iraq and has not yet been identified and destroyed.

There is still much more to do, and, frankly, it will not be possible to do that which we need to do unless we get the full and immediate kind of cooperation that 1441 and all previous resolutions demanded.

The intent of the Iraqi regime to keep from turning over all of its weapons of mass destruction seems to me has not changed, and not to cooperate with the international community in the manner intended by 1441.

If Iraq had made that strategic decision to disarm, cooperation would be voluntary, even enthusiastic -- not coerced, not pressured. And that is the lesson we learned from South Africa and the Ukraine, where officials did everything possible to ensure complete cooperation with inspectors.

I also listened to Dr. ElBaradei's report with great interest. As we all know, in 1991, the IAEA was just days away from determining that Iraq did not have a nuclear program. We soon found out otherwise. IAEA is now reaching a similar conclusion, but we have to be very cautious. We have to make sure that we do keep the books open, as Dr. ElBaradei said he would. There is dispute about some of these issues and about some of these specific items.

Dr. ElBaradei talked about the aluminum tubes that Iraq has tried to acquire over the years. But we also know that notwithstanding the report today, that there is new information that is available to us, and I believe available to the IAEA, about a European country where Iraq was found shopping for these kinds of tubes. And that country has provided information to us, to IAEA, that the material properties and manufacturing tolerances required by Iraq are more exact, by a factor of 50 percent or more, than those usually specified for rocket motor casings. Its experts concluded that the tolerances

and specifications Iraq was seeking cannot be justified for unguided rockets. And I am very pleased that we will keep this issue open.

I also welcome the compilation of outstanding issues that Dr. Blix and his staff have provided to some of us and will make available to all of us. UNMOVIC put together a solid piece of research that adds up, when one reads the entire 167 pages, adds up fact by chilling fact, to a damning record of 12 years of lies, deception and failure to come clean on the part of Iraq.

This document is, in fact, a catalog of 12 years of abject failure, not by the inspectors, but by Iraq. We have looked carefully at the draft given to the UNMOVIC commissioners and which will be available more widely after this meeting, and we have found nearly 30 instances where Iraq refused to provide credible evidence substantiating its claims. We have counted 17 examples when the previous inspectors actually uncovered evidence contradicting Iraqi claims. We see instance after instance of Iraq lying to the previous inspectors and planting false evidence, activities which we believe are still ongoing.

As you read this document, you can see page after page of how Iraq has obstructed the inspectors at nearly every turn over the years. Just by way of example, we've talked about the R-400 bombs. The report says that during the period 1992, Iraq changed its declaration on the quantity of bombs it had produced, changed the declaration several times. In 1992, it declared it had produced a total of 1,200 of these bombs. With the admission, finally, after it was pulled out of them, of an offensive biological warfare program in 1995, this number was subsequently changed to a total of 1,550 such bombs. Given the lack of specific information from Iraq, UNSCOM could not calculate the total number of R-400 bombs that Iraq had produced for its programs.

And so, this report says it has proved impossible to verify the production and destruction details of R-400 bombs. UNMOVIC cannot discount the possibility that some CW- and BW-filled R-400 bombs remain in Iraq.

In this document, UNMOVIC says actions that Iraq could take to help resolve this question, present any remaining R-400 bombs and all relevant molds, provide more supporting documentation on production, inventory relating to the R-400 and R-400A bombs it manufactured, provide further documentation explaining the coding system that it had used with the R-400 type bombs, including coding assigned to specific CBW agents, provide credible evidence that the R-400 bomb production line stopped after September 1990.

This is just one example of the kinds of documentation we'll all be seeing. The question that leaps out at you is that these are issues, these actions that Iraq is being asked to take, they could have taken many times over the preceding 12 years. We're not talking about immediately. We're talking about why hasn't it been done over the last 12 years, and how can we rely on assurances now in the presence of this solid record of lying and deceit over the years?

These questions could easily have been cleared up in Iraq's December 7th declaration. There should not be these kinds of outstanding issues to work on, but there are, and we will all examine them carefully.

The point is that this document conclusively shows that Iraq had and still has the capability to manufacture these kinds of weapons, that Iraq had and still has the capability to manufacture not only chemical but biological weapons, and that Iraq had and still has literally tens of thousands of delivery systems, including increasingly capable and dangerous unmanned aerial vehicles.

These are not new questions being presented for our consideration. These are old questions that have

not been resolved and could have been resolved in December with a declaration, or could have been fully resolved over the last four months if Iraq had come forward and do what 1441 wanted it to do.

In his report this morning, Dr. Blix remarked on the paucity of information on Iraq's programs since 1998. We've all been working hard to fill that gap. But Iraq is the one who could fill that gap, if it was truly complying with 1441. It would be inundating the inspectors with new information, not holding it back begrudgingly.

The draft we reviewed today in preparation for this meeting was 167 pages long. If Iraq were genuinely committed to disarmament, Dr. Blix's document would not be 167 pages of issues and questions; it would be thousands upon thousands of pages of answers about anthrax, about VX, about sarin, about unmanned aerial vehicles. It would set out in detail all of Iraq's prohibited programs. Then, and only then, could the inspectors really do the credible job they need to do of verification, destruction and monitoring.

We've been down this road before. In March 1998, Saddam Hussein was also faced with the threat of military action. He responded with promises. Promises to provide inspectors at that time with immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access. The then-chief inspector reported to this Council a new spirit of cooperation, along with his hope that the inspectors could move very quickly to verify Iraq's disarmament.

We know what happened to that hope. There was no progress on disarmament, and nine months later the inspectors found it necessary to withdraw.

I regret that not much has changed. Iraq's current behavior, like the behavior chronicled in Dr. Blix's document, reveals its strategic decision to continue to delay, to deceive, to try to throw us off the trail, to make it more difficult to hope that the will of the international community will be fractured, that we will go off in different directions, that we will get bored with the task, that we will remove the pressure, we will remove the force. And we know what has happened when that has been done in the past.

We know that the Iraqis still are not volunteering information and, when they do, what they are giving is often partial and misleading. We know that when confronted with facts, the Iraqis still are changing their story to explain those facts -- but not enough to give us the truth.

So has the strategic decision been made to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction by the leadership in Baghdad? My judgment, I think our judgment, has to be clearly not. And this is now the reality we, the Council, must deal with.

Security Council membership carries heavy responsibility, responsibility of the community of nations to take the hard decisions on tough issues such as the one we are facing today.

Last November, this Council stepped up to its responsibilities. We must not walk away. We must not find ourselves here this coming November with the pressure removed and with Iraq once again marching down the merry path to weapons of mass destruction, threatening the region, threatening the world.

If we fail to meet our responsibilities, the credibility of this Council and its ability to deal with all the critical challenges we face will suffer. As we sit here, let us not forget the horror still going on in Iraq, with a spare moment to remember the suffering Iraqi people whose treasure is spent on these kinds of programs and not for their own benefit; people who are being beaten, brutalized and robbed by Saddam and his regime.

Colleagues, now is the time for the Council to send a clear message to Saddam that we have not been taken in by his transparent tactics. Nobody wants war, but it is clear that the limited progress we have seen, the process changes we have seen, the slight, substantive changes we have seen, come from the presence of a large military force -- nations who are willing to put their young men and women in harm's way in order to rid the world of these dangerous weapons.

It doesn't come simply from resolutions. It doesn't come simply from inspectors. It comes from the will of this Council, the unified political will of this Council and the willingness to use force, if it comes to that, to make sure that we achieve the disarmament of Iraq.

Now is the time for the Council to tell Saddam Hussein that the clock has not been stopped by his stratagems and his machinations. We believe that the resolution that has been put forward for action by this Council is appropriate and, in the very near future, we should bring it before this Council for a vote.

The clock continues to tick and the consequences of Saddam Hussein's continued refusal to disarm will be very, very real.

Thank you.
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