



## Foreign Press Center Briefing

**Secretary Colin L. Powell**  
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**SECRETARY POWELL:** It's a great pleasure to be here at the Press Center, and especially to also be available to the Press Center in New York, and I hope to come back here on a more frequent basis in the months ahead.

Today is an important day. Not only are we watching coalition forces bring the military part of this campaign to an end, we entered a new phase of the history of Iraq at the ziggurat of Ur, a famous place where perhaps civilization started. And at that location earlier today, dozens and dozens, up to a hundred, Iraqi representatives came together representing every part of Iraq, and they began a discussion about their future, a future that will be free of tyranny, a future that will be free of dictators, a future that will be based on democracy, a future that will be in the hands of a government, that will be committed to values that the Iraqi people hold dear as human beings who want to live in freedom and who want to live under representative government.

The United States is pleased that as a result of the work of American armed forces, as well as the armed forces of so many other coalition members, we were able to bring this day to the people of Iraq.

In the weeks ahead, more such meetings will be held and, as a result of these meetings, leadership will be identified, an interim authority will be created, and that interim authority will grow into a new government for the people of Iraq.

And so this is a day of hope. It is also a day where coalition forces, while battling remaining remnants of the Iraqi regime, are also focusing their attention on humanitarian aid, putting hospitals back in working order. A number of our coalition partners plan to bring in field hospitals into Iraq in the next -- over the next several days to take care of the people of Iraq, where General Jay Garner and his people are preparing to deploy into Iraq and begin the process of rebuilding ministries.

And so as one phase of this operation starts to wind down, another phase begins, a phase that really is the important phase, the phase that will put in place a government of a nation that intends in the future to live in peace with its neighbors, to use the wealth of that nation for the benefit of the people of that nation, and a nation that will no longer be pursuing terrorism, and no longer be putting people in prison, will no longer be raping, will no longer be threatening its neighbors, weapons of mass destruction gone.

I think it is a moment of hope for not only the people of Iraq, but for the people of the region and the people of the world. And I would be delighted to take your questions.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Mr. Secretary, the international community, clearly and unfortunately, was unable to resolve the Iraqi crisis through the UN. We generated a lot of talks about how important and relevant the UN actually is. Richard Perle, for example, says that the organization will sink with Saddam Hussein's regime.

As the chief foreign policy advisor to U.S. President, do you think the UN is still relevant and important from the point of view of prevention of military conflicts, not only humanitarian assistance, and do you think the organization needs to be reformed?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The UN remains an important organization. The President and other leaders in the coalition -- Prime Minister Blair, President Aznar, Prime Minister Berlusconi and many others, Prime Minister Howard of Australia -- have all indicated that they believe the UN has a role to play as we go forward in the reconstruction and the rebuilding of Iraq.

The UN did come together last fall when it passed Resolution 1441 by a unanimous vote. It took seven weeks of hard negotiations to do that, from the President's speech on the 12th of September to 1441 on the 8th of November. So it could come together.

Where we were unable to go forward, however, is that when it was clear that Saddam Hussein was not complying with his obligations under 1441 and other resolutions, many other resolutions over a 12-year period, the Security Council could not agree to come together on a second resolution that would have led to serious consequences.

Nevertheless, we believe that the authority that the UN had provided in 1441 and earlier resolutions gave a willing coalition more than adequate authority to impose those serious consequences, and you know the rest of the story.

So the UN cannot deal with every situation that comes along when there were strongly held points of view, different points of view. We've seen this before. We saw it in Kosovo a few years ago. The UN cannot solve every problem that is brought before it. And I would hope that the Security Council and the UN leadership would examine perhaps other ways of dealing with situations like this as they come along.

But the UN will remain relevant. It does many important things around the world every day. The United Nations has paid its -- the United States has paid its arrears to the United Nations. We have put in place our effort to rejoin UNESCO, and we believe the UN has an important role to play in the future.

**QUESTION:** And, Mr. Secretary, the rhetoric seems to be ratcheted up against Syria, and accusing it of maintaining weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons. The Syrians responded by saying that let's make the Middle East a WMD-free zone. Do you welcome such a proposition, and can you see a situation where Israel will accede to such a proposition?

And on the roadmap, sir, do you believe that Sharon's response will help the roadmap or will hinder it? Is it designed to circumvent it?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** On the second question, with respect to the roadmap, as the President has said clearly, now that we have a new Israeli Government in place, and now that we are close to having a Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority appointed and confirmed by the PLC -- and we hope that will happen some time in the next week or so. When Abu Mazen is confirmed by a vote of confidence by the PLC, we will release the roadmap as it was written last November, as it was finalized last -- excuse me -- last December.

And we hope that both parties will use this roadmap as a way of reaching the vision that the President laid out in his speech of 24 June last year. And that also is the vision that was laid out by the Arab League nations following on the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

With respect to Syria, the issues that we have raised in recent days with respect to Syria's development of weapons of mass destruction--and you specifically mentioned chemical weapons--are issues we have raised with Syria repeatedly over the years. We are concerned about Syria's development of these kinds of weapons. We are concerned about Syria's continuing support of terrorist organizations. And, in recent weeks, we have been concerned about the flow of material across the Syrian border into Iraq, as well as the flow of individuals back and forth across the Syrian-Iraq border. Some of these individuals went from Syria into Iraq to oppose coalition forces.

And we also have concerns, which we have expressed rather directly and forcefully to the Syrians, over the fact that some Iraqi officials who are guilty of crimes, or at least strongly suspected of crimes, may be seeking haven in Syria.

We don't believe Syria should find this in their interest to give refuge, to give haven to these sorts of individuals, who should be returned to Iraq to face the justice that will be meted out by the Iraqi people. And we will make these points to Syria strongly.

We hope that Syria understands now that there is a new environment in the region with the end of the regime of Saddam Hussein, and that Syria will reconsider its policies of past years and understand that there are better choices it can make than the choices it has made in the past.

With respect to weapons of mass destruction, it has always been U.S. policy that we would like to see that whole region free of weapons of mass destruction.

**QUESTION:** And the roadmap? Can I follow up on the roadmap?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Follow up on the roadmap. Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Sir, the Israelis said that they presented to you their modification on the roadmap. Have you received anything from the other side, from the Palestinians? And is it still open for change? You have told us before that it is not negotiable.

And now on the settlements, on the settlements, as part of the roadmap, eh?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** The what?

**QUESTION:** On the settlements, which is part of the roadmap, we see the Israelis are --the activities of building settlements is really very high. We saw it on television. We saw reports. So what is your remarks on the settlements?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** With respect to the roadmap, as I said a moment or two ago, the roadmap will be released to the parties after Mr. Abu Mazen is confirmed, and it will be the roadmap draft that was finished last December.

The Israelis have provided us some preliminary comments to the roadmap. And we expect that after the roadmap has been formally released we will receive additional comments from the Israeli side, and we also expect at that time to receive comments from the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority.

These are comments that will come in. They will be considered by the Quartet. But, really, these are comments that both sides have to begin to discuss with each other and share with each other.

This is going to be a very difficult process, but I believe progress can be made if both sides enter this roadmap process with an understanding of the needs of the other side and with a good faith effort to use the new situation in the Palestinian Authority, a new leadership under the direction of Mr. Abu Mazen, and with a newly elected Government of Israel, we have a new opportunity, an opportunity, I think, that is enhanced by what has happened by the removal of the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

So we have a real chance now to get some progress. And part of that progress and part of the roadmap, an essential part of the roadmap, will be to deal with the issue of settlements. We understand that and we know that the Israeli Government understands that. And we will see how that works itself out.

Our position with respect to settlements is quite clear: That has to come to an end.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, what kind of a role, or roles, do you envision for Turkey, your coalition partner, in political restructuring of Iraq?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** First of all, I'd like to say that in recent weeks we've been very pleased at the cooperation we have received from Turkey with respect to allowing humanitarian supplies and allowing supplies for our troops to move across Turkey and over the border in a very expeditious manner. I discussed this with the Turkish leadership when I was in Ankara two weeks ago, and I have had almost daily conversations with Foreign Minister Gul to make sure that our cooperation is solid. And that also paid off in that we were able to satisfy Turkish concerns about Northern Iraq, thereby not requiring any incursion on the part of Turkish forces.

We will keep in very close touch with Turkish authorities as to political developments in Iraq, and I think as this process of meetings continues, with the first one today, there will be an opportunity for all of Iraq's neighbors to provide suggestions and input to that process. I won't prejudge now who might play a more active or less active role. At the meeting today, there were about five coalition countries that were represented at the meeting at Ur, and I expect that other coalition countries will have an opportunity to play in the development of the new government of Iraq.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, could you clarify, once and for all, whether the war against terrorism affects not only terrorism in the United States, but also against the largest democracy, India. Because I know India has already introduced a dialogue. Now, dialogue has been tried for 50 years. The reason it failed is that there are two fundamental ideas of how the state should be run. And also, when one side wants to annex the territory that belongs to another state, with an integral part of India, and dialogue is not -- I mean, what purpose is the dialogue?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** We believe that terrorism is terrorism. And it is not just an American phenomenon; it is a curse on the face of civilization and it affects nations throughout the world. We have condemned terrorist attacks across the line of control on the subcontinent, and we will continue to do so.

We will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan and the Government of India as we move forward, and we will continue to do everything we can to lower the temperature in that part of the world, and to see whether or not opportunities can be created for the two sides to enter into a dialogue.

Dialogue has been difficult over the years. But to solve this kind of a problem, I think dialogue is the right solution, and a resort to force would not be the appropriate solution.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, on North Korea?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** North Korea?

**QUESTION:** I talk Egypt.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Okay. We'll come to you next.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, a lot of fears have been made about who is next. And some people believed to be close with the administration said that the regimes backing Cairo and in Saudi Arabia should be nervous right now. How do you address that point? And does the U.S. has a plan to spread a set of values at gunpoint, in your view, at this point?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** No, of course not. The President has spoken clearly about this, as recently as two days ago, over the weekend. We have concerns about Syria. We have let Syria let know of our concerns. We also have concerns about some of the policies of Iran. We have made the Iranians fully aware of our concerns.

But there is no list. There is no war plan right now to go attack someone else, either for the purpose of overthrowing their leadership or for the purpose of imposing democratic values.

Democratic values have to ultimately come from within a society and within a nation because they believe that's the best way for them to move forward. But, you know, we will see how this develops in the various countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf in the months and years ahead.

I hope that with the example of Turkey as a democratic nation, and with a new example now of Iraq as a democratic nation -- two strong Muslim nations -- showing that democracy is not something that has to be alien to Muslims and can work for Muslims, I hope that people throughout that part of the world will realize the benefits that come when you have a democratic form of government that is responsive to the needs of the people, uses the wealth of the country to benefit the people, I hope that that will become a more and more attractive political system throughout the region, as it is in many other parts of the world.

There should be no reason that we should be fearful of democracy in the Middle East or in the Gulf region, but each nation will have to find its own way. And Iraq was a unique case where it wasn't just a matter of a dictator being there; it was a dictator terrorizing his people, raping and pillaging his own people, wasting his treasure; but, beyond that, invading his neighbors and threatening the whole world with weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorists activities and creating a nexus between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, and totally ignoring the role of the international community that told him to get rid of these weapons for a period of 12 years. And that's what led us to this point. But from this point on, the people of Iraq have a much more hopeful future to look forward to.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, there seems to be some hopeful sounds coming out of your administration and North Korea on a settlement there. Do you think that there is likely to be a meeting soon between the administration and North Korea? And what sort of forum do you expect to attend? And how much do you think this is a flow-on from what happened in Iraq?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Very good. You're trying to get it all at once, aren't you? (Laughter.)

As you noticed from weekend commentary, there has been some overall improvement, I think, in the prospects for a dialogue with North Korea. We have made it clear from the very beginning of this situation that we believe that this was a problem not just between the North Koreans and the United States, but between the North Koreans, the United States and its neighbors, and we wanted to approach this in a multilateral way.

The North Koreans indicated last Friday, I think it was, that forum was not as important as a dialogue beginning. And so we are -- we are following up on that statement in diplomatic channels. And I think, as many of you know, long before that statement we were pursuing ways of moving forward on a multilateral -- on a multilateral basis.

The Russians also made a statement last week that I think was helpful. And I think, obviously, with the end of the conflict in Iraq, people might have taken note of that as well. So I think a lot of pieces have come together.

But we will be following all of these ideas through diplomatic channels. And I am not prepared to announce anything today with respect to meetings, attendance levels, what is multilateral, and how best to get started, and at what level. All of these are issues we are going to be discussing with our friends.

The one thing that is absolutely clear is that at whatever level it starts, and with whatever attendance, it has to ultimately encompass the views and thoughts of all of the neighbors in the region.

**QUESTION:** When the Congress passed the supplemental, they conditioned the release of \$1 billion grant to Turkey on Turkey's cooperation in Iraq, and named you personally as the authority to decide on that cooperation. Once the President signs the bill, what would your inclination be, sir? Would you wait to see how Turkey is cooperating in the region, or would you give a go-ahead immediately for the release?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, I haven't made a decision about that. It's not just a matter of cooperation; it's also a matter of what the need is at that time. So we will get an appropriation, and then, while working with my colleagues within the administration, Department of Treasury and others, and consulting with international financial institutions, we'll get a judgment of what Turkey's needs would be. Because the \$1 billion is going to be used to leverage, leverage up a larger amount of money.

There is no secret to the fact that we were very disappointed last month when the Turkish parliament was unable to act on what we believe was a very important request. The Turkish Government was also disappointed. They took it to their parliament at our request, and we didn't get the vote we had hoped for.

That disappointment is real, but it is now also history and we're moving forward. And I think the relationship that we have with Turkey is strong and solid. We've been allies for many, many years, and the \$1 billion will be used in a way that will help Turkey to develop its economy. And the level of cooperation that we have seen in the last few weeks has been quite, quite satisfactory, and I would certainly take that into account, but I can't tell you now what judgment I might make once I have the funds available to me.

**QUESTION:** Thank you sir. One of the resolutions, UN resolution, that was used as a legal justification for the war against Iraq was 687. Article 14 from that resolution calls upon all countries in the area to get rid of their weapons, a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. The President has said it very clearly that United States administration is determined to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction the day before yesterday.

The Arab people don't stop wondering, while you are piling up the pressure on Syria, Israel, nobody says a word about it. Even now when you were asked a question about Israel, you didn't mention it by name; you said that you would like the area to be free of weapons of mass destructions.

Is the United States administration willing to ask Israel to submit to international inspections? I'm sure you would like Syria to do that. Would you mind or would you accept that Israel should also submit itself to international inspection for weapons of mass destructions?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** We would like to see a region that is free of all weapons of mass destruction, to repeat what I said earlier. And I hope that if we can move forward with a comprehensive peace process that leads to a comprehensive solution that creates a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with the Jewish state, Israel, and ultimately have that comprehensive solution reach out and touch Lebanon and Syria, then I think a lot of pieces will begin to fall in place with respect to what people's various needs are. But right now, we will just continue to say that we believe that the entire region should be free of weapons of mass destruction.

**QUESTION:** One on Cuba?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we have this gentleman.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.) How would you characterize the relationship between the United States (inaudible) administration (inaudible) visit? And where do you see them going? How can they improve where they are?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I think where we're going is to a postponement of the visit and we'll schedule the visit a little bit later on in the year. So, we had to cancel this date. We haven't canceled the visit. It's been put off. I hope it will be rescheduled in the early fall period.

Obviously, we were disappointed in the initial Canadian response to the conflict, but I am confident that now that we are in the reconstruction and humanitarian phase, that Canada is in a unique position to provide assistance, financial or other forms of assistance, and I look forward to working with my colleague, Foreign Minister Bill Graham, and I know that the President looks forward to working with Mr. Chretien as we move into the future.

Canada and the United States are, frankly, inseparable. We occupy this one huge land along with our neighbors to the south in Mexico. And differences will come along, disagreements will come along, but our two nations are bound strongly by common values, by common history and a common lineage, so we will get over whatever disappointments have existed in recent weeks.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, I have a question on Cuba. Can you give us an assessment of what is your advice to the countries that are near to both in terms of the human rights situation in Cuba, especially to Mexico that has been too close to the Cuban Government?

And a quick second question. There is some countries that are calling the United States the "police of the world." Do you agree with that?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** First of all, with respect to Cuba, it has always had a horrible human rights record. And rather than improving as we go into the 21st century, it's getting worse.

I mean, when you look at what they have done in recent weeks and recent months with respect to stifling dissent, with respect to arresting people and sentencing them to long years in prison, in jail, just for expressing a point of view that is different from that of Fidel Castro, it should be an outrage to everyone. It should be an outrage to every leader in this hemisphere, every leader in this world.

And for those nations of the Western Hemisphere who are committed to what we call, "The Community of Democracies," 34 of the 35 nations in this hemisphere have signed on to this basic set of principles with respect to democracy. Only Cuba is outside of this sphere of democracy.

I think that their actions are condemnable, but we should not be surprised. That has been the patten and the history of Fidel Castro's Cuba for many, many years. And once again, he has demonstrated vividly to us the nature of his regime and I hope it will be well noted by all of the nations in the region, as well as those nations who will be participating in Geneva at the Human Rights Commission meeting when appropriate votes are held.

With respect to the United States being the policemen of the world, we do not wish to be the policemen of the world. When you look at our agenda and when you look at what the President has committed his administration to -- \$5 billion a year more for aid under the Millennium Challenge Account, \$15 billion a year more, \$15 billion more for HIV/AIDS, Free Trade Agreements with nations throughout the world, getting the Doha round of World Trading Organization negotiations moving -- his agenda is one to help people to a better life. His agenda is one to work with friends and alliances throughout the world. But at the same time, the President's agenda is one that is based on principles, one that's based on a foreign policy that rests on not only our value system and our democratic political system and our strong economy, but our military force when we have a need for it.

We do not seek war. We do not look for wars. We don't need wars. We don't want wars. But we will not be afraid to fight them when those wars are necessary to protect the American people, to protect our interests, to protect our friends. And when you look at where we have been "a policeman" for the last 12 years, is there one of those countries that we have imposed ourselves? Has one of those countries become an American colony? Has one of those countries become an American state?

Kuwait, we went there in 1991 to free a country, a Muslim country that had been invaded by another Muslim country. In Kosovo, we helped Muslim people. In Afghanistan we had to go after terrorism, and we did, and put down the Taliban, and we're still working to get all the remaining elements of the Taliban and the al-Qaida rounded up in Afghanistan. And what did we then do? We put in place a system that would allow President Karzai to start to rebuild an Afghan society and an Afghan Government and an Afghan economy. And we rallied the international community to help Afghanistan.

And now here, in Iraq, 17, 18 resolutions, whatever the number is condemning this regime, finding this regime guilty; and the regime said: We don't care what the international community thinks. We're going to continue to terrorize people, we're going to continue to use our oil wells -- not to build hospitals and schools -- we're going to use our oil wells to build weapons of mass destruction and to deprive people that we don't like in our own country.

And, finally, the United States was willing to step up and say this cannot continue, and led a willing coalition into Operation Iraqi Freedom. And so if this is what somebody would characterize negatively as policemen of the world, it was when a policeman was needed. And we were willing to do it with like-minded members of coalitions that went into these places.

And what did we do when we had finished our work? We tried to leave those places, and have left those places better, than we found them and under leadership of their own people. And this is not just a recent phenomenon for the United States. This is always the way we have done it. And just look at our record over the last 50 or 60 years of what we have done in the aftermath of conflict; it is a proud record that all Americans and all freedom-loving people throughout the world should be proud of.

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