



**GEORGE W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW WITH COLIN L. POWELL AND RICHARD L. ARMITAGE**

March 28, 2017  
Alexandria, Virginia

**Participants**

*University of Virginia*

Russell L. Riley, chair

Barbara A. Perry

Marc J. Selverstone

**Also Present**

Margaret “Peggy” Cifrino

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**Riley:** A word or two before we get underway. General Powell, you've been through this drill before with us. We'll talk, I hope candidly, into the recorders, but you'll have an opportunity to review a transcript within a couple of months after it's prepared. The transcript becomes the authoritative record of the interview. We don't ask you to sign off on anything until you've had a chance to look at that. If you want to make any stipulations or redactions with respect to the release of the transcript, you have the opportunity to do that. We'd rather you edit yourself in the transcript rather than into the tape recorder. We always tell people at this stage our principal mission is to get an accurate record for historical purposes, not just to have a conversation with us. That's our purpose and we have an unblemished record over some 20 or 30 years of maintaining those confidences. We appreciate your time.

**Powell:** Who else have you spoken to from the administration?

**Riley:** About—

**Powell:** About these issues.

**Riley:** We've spoken overall with about 90 people; we're getting very close to the end of the Bush 43 [George W. Bush] project. We hope to interview the President and the First Lady sometime later this year, although the scheduling on that hasn't worked out yet. In the foreign policy area—

**Perry:** Secretary [Donald] Rumsfeld and his entourage.

**Powell:** His entourage?

**Perry:** His entourage came to Charlottesville with him.

**Silverstone:** Five or so in the room.

**Perry:** Paul Wolfowitz came along and a couple of media people.

**Powell:** Media people?

**Perry:** A couple of his media people?

**Silverstone:** Torie [Victoria] Clark was there.

**Perry:** And Larry Dorita.

**Powell:** OK.

**Riley:** Both Chiefs of Staff—Andy Card and Josh Bolten.

**Perry:** Vice President [Richard] Cheney.

**Silverstone:** Secretary [Condoleezza] Rice.

**Riley:** Steven Hadley, so most of the principals in foreign policy and a fair number of people with—[Lewis Paul, III] Bremer.

**Silverstone:** [Ryan] Crocker.

**Perry:** [Zalmay] Khalilzad.

**Riley:** So it's the rule rather than the exception, most of the senior people in the foreign policy area.

**Powell:** OK.

**Riley:** Until we get to you, and we're happy for this contribution.

**Powell:** I was saying to Rich, this really is not about so much my stewardship, it's about the President.

**Riley:** Exactly. Ready?

**Powell:** Yes.

**Riley:** Terrific.

**Powell:** Rich and Peggy are my institutional memory. I didn't have a Torie Clark or anybody, but I have Rich and Peggy.

**Riley:** We're delighted to have them. For the record, this is the Colin Powell and Rich Armitage interview for the George W. Bush project. Thank you for your time. I know that we have limited time, but one of the things we'd like to hear you talk about to begin with is your relationship before you got into the Bush 43 administration, so that we'll have a better sense about what your personal relations were.

**Powell:** Our relationship?

**Riley:** Yes, the two of you before you actually get to the State Department.

**Powell:** Ambassador Armitage and I met in January of 1981. It was the beginning of the [Ronald] Reagan administration. I was military assistant to the then Deputy Secretary of Defense and Mr. Armitage came in to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, which was then split into two pieces, international security affairs and international security policy, which Mr. Richard Perle handled. I can't quite tell you how it happened, but we

developed a relationship in that period. We're both military veterans, we both speak the same language. We connected in that first couple of weeks and the relationship has been strong for the last—40, 40-odd years?

**Armitage:** Just about.

**Powell:** Thirty-six, 37 years, close to 40. We have done many things together over the years. When he left government I was at the White House as National Security Advisor; he was nevertheless my daily contact. We followed defense matters and foreign policy matters very closely and families very closely. We speak every day.

**Riley:** Mr. Armitage, do you have anything—any additional comments?

**Armitage:** We shared not only being Vietnam veterans and speaking the same language but we were kind of excited about being part of the Reagan revolution, particularly the Department of Defense, because it was quite clear that after the four years of Mr. [Jimmy] Carter, the Department was going to get a shot in the arm and a shot for the morale. So that added—at least as I recall—

**Powell:** Absolutely.

**Armitage:** —to our relationship.

**Riley:** Mr. Armitage, you were more heavily involved in the campaign in 2000 than General Powell?

**Armitage:** Correct.

**Riley:** Can you tell us just a little bit about—

**Armitage:** I was invited to join something that ultimately became known as the Vulcans and Condi Rice and the usual suspects—Paul Wolfowitz, Dov Zakheim, Bob Blackwill, Bob Zoellick. We would travel. On I think three occasions or so went to Austin—at least I did, to meet with the then Governor in his dining room and talk about foreign policy. He was very disarming because he would say, “I don’t know anything.” To be there with a guy roughly your same age, being able to talk about foreign policy and pretty much be a blank slate was a pretty exciting and heady time.

**Powell:** I was listed as a Vulcan in a book that was written about the Vulcans, but I was not a Vulcan and never was.

**Perry:** [*chuckling*] For the record.

**Powell:** I’ve argued with that author. He wanted my name on that list and I never attended a Vulcan meeting. I got my reports from hearing about it.

**Armitage:** Well, he was there in spirit.

**Silverstone:** Can you say something about that? The interactions between the two of you as you were with the group and then—

**Armitage:** As the Secretary said, we talk every day. The truth of the matter is we talk several times a day every day. We did then. I'd tell him what went on, who was there, who said what, what the President said.

**Powell:** It was always in confidence. We never told anybody else. We didn't feel it was necessary. During the same period—because it's in your list of questions, I first met President Bush I think when he was dropping in to see his father. I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I was also National Security Advisor during that period, so that's where I met him. But we didn't have anything to do with each other over the next decade or so. In fact, I got to know his family better than I knew him because we went on a couple of cruises in the Aegean with 41 [George H. W. Bush] and family, which included 43's family and also Jeb Bush's family. So I knew all the grandkids on two cruises, two years in a row. Very lovely time for my wife and me and all of them.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** When I did get to see him directly incident to the 2000 campaign, I was in Texas. I went there at least twice. Once I went as part of America's Promise Alliance.

**Cifrino:** Did a big event with you.

**Powell:** Yes, when we did a big event with a bunch of kids. He was very supportive of what we were doing with America's Promise. You know what America's Promise is?

**Riley/Perry:** Yes.

**Powell:** So we went and I participated in a rally with him; there are pictures of it. It was a great day. Then on another occasion I went after that and stayed with him for just an hour or two in his residence, the Governor's residence.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** It was that meeting where he made it clear to me that he was seriously thinking of running. I think he had already decided. They all say that—we're seriously thinking of running—I think—with [Barack] Obama it was the same story. So I listened to him and he talked about it. You could tell he was not only deadly serious, he was deeply convinced he would win. To this day I remember him saying, "I can do this and I will win." It talks a little bit to his self-confidence, but also to his faith.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** He was speaking from a position of self-confidence and faith; something inside him was moving him to do this. It was something moving inside of him that would cause him to win. So I left there with the impression that this guy is going to run and he is determined he's going to win. I did not share his confidence at the moment [*laughter*] because I didn't know him.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** You also asked about my convention appearance. I also spoke at the '96 convention for Bob Dole. In 2000 I spoke for President Bush in Philadelphia. On both occasions I wrote the speech myself; nobody wrote it for me. I had some professional help in editing. Then before actually delivering it I gave it to the hosts at the convention, the RNC [Republican National Committee], and let them read it, but on both occasions I never got editing from them at that late date.

The one great experience out of the '96 and 2000 events and speechwriting was I also had to go to teleprompter school. In '96. It's not a simple matter just to stand up and look at a teleprompter; there's a skill to it. When they realized I did not have that skill during the first rehearsal I had to go to teleprompter school. I got pretty good at it. But the speech was mine. It was also designed—contrary to current people giving speeches at conventions—that I was there to talk about the candidate I was supporting, not to attack his opponent. I don't do that; I'm just not a politician, I'm not a political figure, although I'm looked at in some ways like this.

The other thing I would say about that period—because Rich talked about Vulcans—I went with the President twice to events and I introduced him twice. As soon as I got through introducing him and got offstage I left as fast as I could. This is not anything that I was comfortable doing. But I did it twice. Then I did the convention, so I thought I had paid my dues.

It was in the course of those events with candidate Bush, Governor Bush, that we really got to know each other well. On the second one is when he sort of said, "You know, I'd like you to come into government and be Secretary of State."

**Riley:** That was earlier than—How early did he start talking to you about the Secretary of State position?

**Powell:** There was always something in the ether, that I was expecting to be asked because frankly I was part of the family by then. I'm sure that 41 and Barbara [Bush] were talking to him about his Cabinet. I was expecting to be asked to do something.

**Riley:** I see.

**Powell:** Then he finally asked. It wasn't any long conversation, it was during a car ride, but it was something that was sort of coming; there was no surprise associated with it.

**Silverstone:** You were anticipating that?

**Powell:** I was anticipating it by then, yes.

**Perry:** Could I ask, General, did you in your own mind draw a line between yourself and your individual meetings with Governor Bush and the group—the Vulcans group? Did you make that distinction in your mind?

**Powell:** No, it wasn't anything conscious; Rich was a Vulcan and I wasn't. I never dealt with them. The reality that we'll come to is that I'm not as conservative as any of the other members

of that administration. I'm what I am—a soldier, a guy who kind of knows how to get something done and how to run something—but I am not violently political either on the left or the right except that I would characterize myself as being moderate. I always want to find out what I think the best thing is and the party is irrelevant. I've been known to vote Democratic and Republican.

**Armitage:** Although the Secretary was not a Vulcan, we did participate on the Wake Forest trip, the second speech of President Bush's, Wake Forest. We went down there. They sent an airplane for us. We went down with Doro [Dorothy] Bush on the plane and now Senator [Richard] Burr. We went down to participate afterward. So there was that participation.

**Riley:** OK, was there ever any consideration that you'd go to Defense?

**Powell:** No, I don't think so. Also, I might have still been in that twilight zone where I can't go to Defense except with the kind of exception that General [James] Mattis just got and nobody was thinking about it at that time.

**Riley:** Exactly, and you weren't thinking about it.

**Powell:** I wasn't interested in going to Defense.

**Riley:** You weren't interested in going to it. What about you, Ambassador? There was—The General is smiling. Please.

**Perry:** He just said, "This is a good story."

**Armitage:** The present DNI [Director of National Intelligence] was going to be the Secretary of Defense and I was kind of penciled in as his deputy. The DNI failed his—

**Powell:** Rumsfeld.

**Armitage:** No, no, no—He is the DNI now.

**Riley:** Coats. Was it Dan?

**Armitage:** Yes. Dan Coats. But Dan didn't do well in his orals and Rumsfeld came in. Rumsfeld did interview me for that job and he said to me—and we have a famous picture of you, Condi, and Rummy—

**Powell:** You want me to give the speech or are you going to give it?

**Armitage:** I'm going to give it. *[laughter]* He said, "Well, you seem like a nice enough man—" or young fellow or something—"but I'm going to tell you, you've got less than a 50/50 chance of being my deputy." I'd had just about enough of Don Rumsfeld after an hour with him, and I said, "I've got zero chance of being your deputy." He said, "No, no, just less than 50." The picture—what I'm told afterward is, this would not have been good with Secretary Powell at the State Department and Armitage at the Defense Department. We would have wrapped that town up.

**Powell:** Everybody knew of our relationship.

**Riley:** Right.

**Armitage:** We would have wrapped the town up.

**Powell:** They were right.

**Riley:** I wonder, as a thought experiment, suppose Coats goes to Defense, what does that do to the administration?

**Armitage:** We'd have run that place; we'd have run that town. Both of us were known as pretty capable bureaucrats, know how things worked, we'd done it for years, even when we weren't in government.

**Riley:** Let me ask you, as you're coming in—

**Powell:** There's a back story.

**Riley:** Please.

**Powell:** When this happened with Rumsfeld, we then talked about it of course. Rich did not want to come work for me; I wasn't crazy about him coming to work for me because of the deep personal relationship we had.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** But at the end of the day when he didn't get his wish, which was to go to the Defense Department in some capacity, and I didn't find anybody else that I thought was interesting enough to be my deputy or to have the same kind of relationship with, we finally yielded to the inevitable and he agreed to come work with me. But it was a relationship that is still considered in the State Department to have been unique and beloved. A reporter told us just yesterday, beloved. The reason for it—and I'll give you a story that will illustrate it. I was away one time somewhere—lots of times, but on a particular occasion I was away and the staff went to Rich to have him sign something that said "Acting Secretary."

When I got back and learned of it, I told the staff there is never an "Acting Secretary," I'm alive, no matter where I am; I am the Secretary and he is the Deputy Secretary, but here's what you have to understand and it may be difficult for you to understand—when he signs something it's as good as me signing it. When I sign something it's as good as him signing it. They said, "How do we write that up? How are we going to put that in a directive?" "No, you don't—that's all there is to it. We know each other so well we're inside of each other, we talk to each other every day. So if he makes the decision I'm going to support it and vice versa. If it doesn't work out, we'll fix it because we also know how to fix each other when needed."

That's the way we did it for four years. The staff finally understood. That's why I refused—didn't quite refuse—The Congress in all its wisdom created a second Deputy position. It was because of their unhappiness with the [William J.] Clinton administration—Frankly, they were

not happy with Madeleine [Albright], so they authorized—insisted on a second Deputy for management. I ignored it until my lawyer said, “You have to nominate somebody.” I said, “I don’t want to.” He said, “You have to, it’s the law. You’re violating the law.”

We had a lot of military friends. We brought several retired military guys with us. So Colonel Grant Green was my management guy in the State Department. I called him in and said, “Good news/bad news. The good news is I’m nominating you to be the first-ever Second Deputy Secretary of State.” He said, “What’s the bad news?” I said, “The bad news is I have friends in the Senate. You will never be confirmed.” He wasn’t. Made the nomination, but he was never confirmed. I have friends in the Senate. Been around this town a long time.

The simple reason is, I don’t need another deputy when I have a Rich Armitage. He was management, he was foreign policy, he was running the Department, he was the chaplain, he was the IG [Investigator General]. Everybody would go moan to him when they were mad at me. True?

**Armitage:** Yes. It was really freeing up to the staff because they realized they don’t have to go to the Secretary of State for everything. There are truly important items and they can intrude on his time, but they can just get an answer from me. It’s a lot easier to get to me because I didn’t have all the foreign policy duties day in and day out that the Secretary has.

**Silverstone:** How do you think that the team that you put together played or was perceived once you decided to go and work with General Powell? Did Rumsfeld at Defense look at what was happening at State differently than he might otherwise?

**Powell:** Go ahead.

**Armitage:** He never had a team that could run. They didn’t run and they weren’t a team and we did. We ran rings around them at all the meetings. Now, running rings around somebody bureaucratically doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re going to get the answer from that administration that you want, particularly on Iraq, North Korea, and the peace process. But on every other issue I would almost defy you to find where we lost.

**Powell:** Right after I was announced by the President in a schoolhouse in Texas, I started with a little joke and then accepted the nomination or the appointment with, “I’d be very honored to serve.” Then I took questions. I went for a little while with the questions with the President and Vice President-elect standing behind me. As soon as I got offstage and headed to the plane, Rich called and said, “You have screwed up.” That is not quite the language—

**Armitage:** [REDACTED]. Sorry, ma’am.

**Powell:** We’ll edit it out later.

**Riley:** No, no, please don’t edit it out.

**Powell:** He said, “You overdid it. It didn’t look right with you taking all the questions.” Of course I had the background to answer them. So he said—His position was—and I of course said, “I don’t think I did,” but I did. The problem it created and stayed with us for the rest of the

time is it made everybody else on the team nervous about us, particularly nervous because Rich and I were so close and because we had a team that we brought with us.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** Colonel Green was our management guy, Colonel [Paul] Kelly was our legislative affairs guy—

**Powell:** Jim Kelly was a Navy captain and served as an Assistant Secretary for Asia. So we brought in all these retired military types and, not unlike what has happened in the [Donald J.] Trump administration. The State Department staff was worried, but only briefly. Within just a very short period of time they knew that we were now a team. They frankly welcomed the discipline that we brought into the Department.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** I'll never forget the day at one of our staff meetings—And we met with the whole staff, principal staff, every morning, about 40 people in the conference room, even standing around the room, just to have morning prayers. Nobody ever got in trouble. If they got in trouble, he'll chew you out later; I'll chew you out separately. They understood it. Then one morning I said, "How many of you guys are afraid to go up and talk to Congress directly?" Almost every hand went up. I said, "That won't work anymore. If you get called by Congress, I expect you to go up right away. You will know what I think and what Rich thinks and what the administration position is. We trust you. You go up there and answer their questions."

There is Vinny Kelly, a retired Marine colonel, now the legislative affairs guy, who was my legislative affairs guy when I was Chairman; he is brilliant and he is tough as nails. I said, "When you come back, tell Vinny what you told them." They couldn't believe it; they were stunned. Then we put an office up on Capitol Hill to do constituent work for members of Congress. I wanted one in the Senate and one in the House—I couldn't get two places, so it was in the House. I don't know if it is still there or not. I don't know. It just created a new relationship between the Department and the Congress, which was very useful.

The folks in the building realized that hey, we've got a new team that works differently. We started fixing things. At the first town hall meeting we said, "We're not here to do any more studies, there will be no more studies. No more papers being written. We're going to do things." They watched us and we did.

**Silverstone:** Before we jump into the administration itself, is there anything you'd like to say about the transition process between Secretary Albright and yourself—

**Powell:** Excellent.

**Silverstone:** —how smoothly it went?

**Powell:** I was announced in Texas and the next night I was at Madeleine's house. I think it was the next night or the night after, the next night. Madeleine called me right away. I said, "Let's get together." So I went to her house in Georgetown. We sat around discussing issues. Then we had

two other meetings during the transition period in the Department, because I moved into the transition office, in the Department, right away. I told her what I was going to be doing. I was going to be meeting with every single bureau, every chief of the bureau and the principal people in that bureau. Rich went to some of those with me.

It was interesting because they thought it was the enemy coming. I said, “We’re not the enemy, we want to know what you guys have been doing. Secretary Albright is leaving, but the rest of you are staying. So we’re now one team, one fight, new leadership.” That made a big difference to the Department because we weren’t the enemy coming in. We were people coming in to build on whatever had been done, to fix what was broken and move on.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** Madeleine and I had a total of three meetings, but something else. One day I’m in the transition office and she’s doing a ceremony up in the Treaty Room. She is doing a ceremony up in the Treaty Room and she invited me to come up and be there. So I did. I was just standing in the crowd as a visitor. She was gracious enough to acknowledge my presence and she went about her ceremony. That’s the relationship we had. It has continued until this day.

**Cifrino:** The one thing I’ll add—One of the most—There are several very famous stories about him, which is why the reporter told us he was beloved and every time State Ops calls they usually say, “Please tell Secretary Powell hello and how much we miss him.” For example, during the transition period, he met with every regional and functional bureau and they said to him, “Well, now, when you bring your team on board, we’ll brief them too.” He looked at them and said, “You don’t get it. You are my team, you’re the team.”

**Powell:** Susan Rice was the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. It was that first session I had with one of the bureaus, it was Africa first. She’s the one who said it—“When your team—” I said, “You’re on my team. Susan, we thank you for what you’ve done, wish you all the best, but this is now my team,” and everybody was happy. Susan was happy. It showed respect for her. We did that with everybody. Every single bureau.

**Perry:** Could I ask, sir, what were your expectations of your role as Secretary of State from your own position as well as conversations perhaps with the President-elect at that point? Was that thrown off a bit by the Ambassador calling you after the press conference in Crawford to say, “Oh, you f’d up”? Did you begin to think, *What is my role going to be?*

**Powell:** I don’t think my role changed because of that. I always listen to him very carefully and I realized I had better watch my p’s and q’s and just be careful, be a little more cautious, which I sometimes was and sometimes I failed at it.

But I got a letter from that grand old man of foreign policy—

**Armitage:** George Kennan.

**Powell:** George Kennan, Mr. Containment. He was 95 years old and he wrote me this letter—We can give it to you if you want to see it.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** “Dear Secretary Powell, congratulations, I just wanted to say a few words to you and by the way—” then he gives me his résumé—as if I needed it. Then he told me what was on his mind. He said there are two jobs that a Secretary of State has, one is to be the senior foreign policy official in the government and two is to run a Department. They are your top priorities, nothing else competes with these two.

Then he went on to say, “I have been troubled in recent years by the amount of time that Secretaries of State have been spending in airplanes, flying everywhere, going everywhere, and essentially cutting out Ambassadors. Ambassadors are no longer as important as they used to be because the Secretary is going to be coming. So I would ask you to look at this carefully and go to all the meetings you have to—I’m not saying not to travel, but don’t do it to such an extent that you can’t do the first two missions. If you are always somewhere and you are not in Washington, which is where the President is, and if you are not running the Department properly and giving them what they need, to include equipment, facilities, inspiration, guidance, and leadership, then you’re not doing your job.”

That is the charter I received from God on high. I agreed with everything he said because I don’t have any need to do touring—I’ve done a lot of touring. The Department was in serious need of leadership from Rich, me, and the others we brought with us, serious need. The information system was broken. Congress was busy telling us we needed a second Deputy, telling us that we needed to put the entire diplomatic telecommunications system under OMB [Office of Management and Budget] because State and CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] couldn’t figure out how to run it. Well, we figured out how to run it and got rid of that law.

We had a building program costing I think a billion dollars a year that was a disaster being run by a 32-year-old person from Little Rock, Arkansas. We brought in another retired general to run that. The question in your folder was who was the spokesman for foreign policy. That was me. But that didn’t mean that others were not spokesmen for foreign policy.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** You had the National Security Advisor, you had the President and the Vice President and occasionally the Secretary of Defense. There was obvious tension in the team, tension that was never entirely resolved. In early 2004 I told the President, “This team is not working as it should; we’re not serving you well. You need to—” after the election of 2004—“you need to get rid of all of us, bring in an entirely new team, and it begins with me because I am the one who is more out of tolerance with the rest of them than anyone else.”

He said “No, no, no. It’s just like [George] Shultz and [Caspar] Weinberger used to be.” I said, “I was *there* with Shultz and Weinberger; this is nothing like Shultz and Weinberger. We simply are not working together as a team and there is confusion within the system.” One of your questions has to do with the National Security Council.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** We had two—one that belonged to Condi Rice and the other one belonged to the Vice President. The Vice President had staffed his office with people to be staffers to the Vice President, but he inserted himself totally into the information flow as if he were the Chief of Staff and into the foreign policy flow. That caused a great deal of confusion. So we then ran into problems almost immediately.

The first one I'll point out—it's in your list of questions—the Kyoto Accord. I'm in my office a short time—a couple of weeks after taking over—and I get a call from Condi saying the President is getting ready to sign a letter to the Congress saying that we will not be participants in the Kyoto Accord. I said, "What?" It was a campaign promise, so it was not a surprise, it was how we do it. I said, "Wait a minute, Condi, we have to talk to our allies and friends first. We've got to put the groundwork in before you do something like this."

She said, "Give me some language." So I gave her some language right away to say we will consult with our allies, dah, dah, dah. So why does it have to go up now? Because Senator Chuck [Charles] Hagel is asking for the administration's position on this. So she calls me back and says, "This language won't sell." I said, "Won't sell with who?" She said, "It just won't sell." I said, "OK, I'll come over right away with different language." I went down to the White House with more language, which I thought would sell.

As I go through the outer office heading into the Oval Office, in the reception room there is Christie [Christine] Todd Whitman, the head of EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], who has not been consulted about this, not been told about it. She is not sure why she is waiting there. So I go into the Oval Office and Condi looks at me with kind of an embarrassed look on her face and she says, "Too late, it's gone."

I said, "What do you mean, 'it's gone'?" She said, "The President signed it, the Vice President gave it to him and the Vice President personally has taken it up to the Hill." Later that morning or the next morning—I can't remember when it was—but in the next 24 hours I said to the President, "We can't work like this. You could have laid the groundwork for this, but now you are going to be faced with a pain in the butt for the next six months. All of your buddies in the EU [European Union] are going to be down on you for not sharing this with them or consulting with them and pulling out of an accord that they thought was pretty good and which the previous administration had agreed to." It is always wise to see what the other guys did before you decide you're going to throw it away, but it was part of his campaign promise.

So I said, "You know, Mr. President, things like this you have to prepare the ground, you have to prepare the groundwork." The other thing I got in trouble on—This one was my—I blame the *Washington Post*. We had a meeting of EU folks here early on. After the meeting we had a press availability. One of the questions that was asked was, "What is going to be your policy with respect to North Korea?" My answer was, "You know, a lot of work has been done, so we look forward to examining that work and then building upon it, changing it—" It was benign information, a benign answer, I thought. But the *Washington Post* wrote it up with a headline: "Powell says Bush administration will follow Clinton." It was not an accurate headline, but I'm used to inaccurate headlines.

In any event, it sent the alarm bells going off. Everything Rich said Powell would be getting in trouble over, I did, all in one statement. So I had to do something that was very distressful; I had to pull it back because the President said no. So I went out and told the press, “No, I was a little—not quite—we’re not ready to—” blah, blah, blah. As a result—this is also reflexive of the way the place worked—I had to pull it back, I had to eat it, which is not a pleasant meal, but I ate it. Because it was not what the President wanted, simple.

Then I said to him, “You know we’re going to have to do something about this. We have to do a study of it.” We never did a study of it, but a year later he realized he had to reach out to North Korea and do something. So I was going to a meeting, one of these Asian meetings, I forget, ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] or something, and I was going to be with the North Koreans in the room. So I said to the President and nobody else—I didn’t tell the Pentagon. Maybe Condi heard it, but I told the President, “If the opportunity presents itself, I’m going to reach out to the North Koreans. You have to do something; we can’t just stand here like this.” He just kind of went, “Umm, umm,” which meant yes, OK.

**Riley:** Washington—

**Powell:** You’re disposable if necessary.

**Cifrino:** The problem with that one is you got too far forward on your skis.

**Powell:** That’s a good line. Whenever I get in trouble I try to find a one liner that will get me out of trouble.

**Riley:** I like the line, I’ve borrowed it many times.

**Powell:** Yes. So I went to—I forget where it was, where does the Sultan live?

**Armitage:** I thought it was Jakarta.

**Powell:** It might have been Jakarta, Brunei, I don’t remember. But in any event one of my guys, Assistant Secretary of State for Asia, Jim Kelly, I said go tell them—bounce into somebody and see if the North Koreans would like to have a cup of coffee tomorrow morning. To my delight and great surprise, they almost fell over themselves. Kelly set up a coffee and they brought their whole team. They were very respectful, but I also know what it is like with North Koreans. So I told them the President has no ill intentions toward your country. The President is concerned about the food problem you have in your country. We want to help you. Please take that back to Pyongyang. We want to help you; we’re not looking for a conflict, but you have to do some things to warrant this kind of help. So that was the beginning of discussions with the North Koreans again.

Shortly after that we created the six-party framework. It hasn’t achieved anything, but it was a way of talking. The President bought into it, all of it; others did not.

**Riley:** I wonder if I could ask Ambassador Armitage, how quickly were you detecting at the Deputies’ level that there was in the Vice President’s orbit a sort of competing center of gravity?

**Armitage:** Day One. There's no question that the National Security Advisor and the Vice President, through Scooter [I. Lewis] Libby, was there at the table and was speaking up. So there was no question—I was more used to a Vice President who kept his counsel private and gave it to the President, but that was clearly not going to be the case.

**Powell:** My experience with a Vice President was being National Security Advisor during the last two years of the Reagan administration with Vice President George Bush, Herbert Walker. He did Vice Presidential stuff. He was also running for office at that point. He essentially relied on me and his own National Security Advisor, but mostly me because I was the one with Reagan, to keep him informed as to what was going on and to make sure he understood what was happening in Washington, that he was never caught short. But he did not insert himself into everything that was going on the way Mr. Cheney felt obliged to.

Remember, during the Bush 41 administration I had worked for Mr. Cheney for four years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and it was a very successful four years. But I also knew that I was being watched by him, by Wolfowitz, by Libby, by Hadley, by all of them. It wasn't troubling to me because I knew what I was doing and Cheney would generally come down on my side of issues. We had a lot to do.

The Cold War was ending, a lot of stuff was going on. So I had a great relationship with Mr. Cheney, but as I wrote in my first book he was still the lonesome cowboy from out in Wyoming. There was always a certain distance. I understood that. The only time he ever overruled me was when I wanted to get rid of all the tactical nuclear weapons in the services and the services objected. They convinced him that it was a bad idea, so he called me up and said, "Well, I don't think we want to do that." I said, "It's your decision, Mr. Secretary. I'll tell you what, we'll be back here in a year." He laughed.

I said, "It's good for you to overrule me, it shows I can be overruled, just don't do it too often." I didn't really say that last part. A year later, when President Bush 41 was going to see [Mikhail] Gorbachev at Malta, he needed something and I gave it to him, in four slides. No paper. There is a picture of me briefing him with these four slides and we got rid of all the tactical nuclear weapons except for some that the Air Force kept.

**Silverstone:** Regarding this dual NSC [National Security Council] setup, is it your sense that the President affirmatively embraced it, or acquiesced?

**Powell:** He accepted it; I don't know if I'd use the word "acquiesce."

**Silverstone:** He accepted it.

**Powell:** He accepted it. I think he saw that Mr. Cheney had a great deal of experience in the Congress, as a Chief of Staff, and so he accepted it for six of the eight years.

**Armitage:** I'll give you a specific anecdote that shows you how he accepted it. Toward the end of the first administration—no, it was after his State of the Union where Ahmed Chalabi was in the box with Laura Bush, you may remember the pictures. The next day, the Secretary was traveling, so I sit in his chair at a Cabinet meeting, which is right next to the President. President Bush came in and all of us, being the usual sycophantic aides, said, "Great job last night, boss,

you knocked it out of the park.” He was liking that. He sat down and then he said, “By the way, what was Ahmed Chalabi doing in the box with Laura?”

**Powell:** Sitting next to Laura.

**Riley:** The President says?

**Armitage:** I was desperate to know this as well. I’m looking around and seeing there are only a couple of people who could have done that, namely Dick Cheney and Dick Cheney, who was there at the meeting, and no one said a word. The President just went on about his business.

**Riley:** Huh, wow.

**Armitage:** Instead of saying, “God damn it, I’m President of the United States and I want to know how he got there.” So he acquiesced, he accepted it.

**Powell:** That’s one example. Another example is when one night Rich and I are across the street at a hotel for a dinner giving honors to my cousin and somebody else.

**Armitage:** John Whitehead.

**Cifrino:** That was a foreign policy dinner, I remember this.

**Powell:** We were in the middle of negotiations of the Six-Party Framework with North Korea and China and everybody else. Jim Kelly was in China or wherever the meeting was being held. We had worked for weeks to get everybody to agree, and it was tough doing because the Pentagon didn’t want to do anything with them except maybe bomb them at the appropriate moment. We were trying to do what the President wanted us to do.

We finally got a set of instructions to Jim. Everybody agreed, including the Vice President’s office. Jim is over there. Rich and I are at the dinner. Condi is out of town and we get a call from Hadley, the Deputy National Security Advisor, and he says—

**Armitage:** You scrambled out to your car.

**Powell:** Yes. He said, “The Vice President has just gone to see the President and we’ve changed the instructions for Jim.” I said, “What do you mean? You changed the instructions that we negotiated and got an agreement on?” He said yes. I said, “What did you do?” He said, “We called Jim directly.” No contact with him or me or anyone in the State Department. “We called Jim and changed the instructions.”

It turns out— Rich and I just went back to the dinner, there was nothing else to do. So the next morning we discovered that Jim didn’t have to use them because something else had happened so it was irrelevant. But I went to see the President. I said, “Mr. President, we can’t work like this. We can’t work and get agreement and then the Vice President walks in and tells you he doesn’t like items and with no further discussion, no opposing point of view, somebody calls out and changes it. If those instructions had been put down, the whole process would have collapsed.”

He said, “Well, I know, but Dick had two points and I only took one of them.”

**Silverstone:** So where does the buck stop, who needs to insert themselves in that process?

**Powell:** The last person to see the President. Very often the last person to see the President was Dick Cheney. Proximity was—

**Armitage:** The answer is the National Security Advisor.

*[Multiple voices]*

**Powell:** That’s where it ought to be, but that’s not where it was.

**Riley:** So why did that happen?

**Powell:** Because the President tolerated it. Bush 41 never would have. We would have had a, “Well, let’s talk about this.” But Cheney had the ability to go in and see the President on many occasions and suddenly something happens. The creation of military commissions. One of the dumbest things we’ve ever done. There was no consultation. Rumsfeld was against it. Suddenly I’m away on a trip and the next thing I hear is that the Vice President with the help of his folks, his lawyer associates at the Justice Department, had come up with this order and had walked it into the President with no further deliberation, no further discussion, and had the President sign it. That created the military commission system.

I said to the President when I got back, “It’s not going to do what your buddies are telling you it’s going to do, because I know military judges and lawyers. You tell a Marine JAG [Judge Advocate General] that his job is to defend this terrorist, guess what he’s going to do? He is going to defend him to the death; that’s his responsibility. That’s his oath. So you’re not going to get any progress through military commissions.” If you put him before an Article III court in Washington, D.C., those 12 folks sitting on the jury out of southwest Washington are going to throw this guy in jail forever and that’s what they’ve been doing for the last 15 years. Whatever they’re called, they have been throwing guys in jail left and right while the military commissions are busy talking to each other at Guantanamo. But that’s how that happened.

My lawyer, William Howard Taft IV, grandson of William Howard Taft—You know him, obviously.

**Perry:** I don’t know him personally, but I’ve studied him.

**Powell:** Will is the international affairs expert in the system, the State Department counsel, so he wrote a long piece on it, saying this is not right. But that was irrelevant. Frankly the President—The proximity the Vice President had to the President made a lot of difference. The President had a lot of confidence in the Vice President and would often take that direction and decide it.

**Riley:** Was Condi in a position where she could have done something about this and didn’t, or was it simply structurally and personally not a fixable problem for her?

**Powell:** I don't know. You interviewed her for three days, you ask her. I'm sure she's given you an answer. But the reality is—

**Riley:** But you've had the position. You were National Security Advisor.

**Powell:** But I had it under Reagan and some very sensible people. It was the last two years of an administration that was in deep trouble when I became Deputy and then National Security Advisor. It was right after Iran-Contra. I was a happy corps commander in Germany minding my own business with 70,000 soldiers over there guarding the Fulda Gap and Rich would come over once a month and we'd eat out.

**Armitage:** I'm not a fan of Dr. Rice's and haven't been, but I have on one thing softened a little bit. She was not the National Security Advisor that I wanted, that we wanted, or that you were when you were National Security Advisor. But she was the National Security Advisor that the only nationally elected figure wanted. He didn't want to have 50/50 decisions at all, or 49/51. He wanted "complete staff work," in other words, to have something served up to him. So she gave that to him.

**Powell:** Good point.

**Armitage:** You've talked to Bremer?

**Riley:** Yes.

**Armitage:** The Secretary, one day—We all took part in these discussions about the invasion of Iraq. The President made some very good decisions—the invasion we can question—but good decisions on how far to decapitate the Army, how far to take de-Ba'athification. They were terrific. Frank [Franklin C.] Miller has the unclassified slides. It was over that decision that the President made in front of all of us, which was overturned by [Paul, III] Jerry Bremer.

The Secretary couldn't believe it. He called Condi and said, "Condi, what is this? Yesterday the President made X decision and now Y? What is going on? Does he know this?" She said, "Yes. He feels he has to support our people in the field."

**Powell:** Here is what makes it even worse. The President made the decision not to disband the Iraqi Army and not to wipe out everybody who had Ba'ath Party membership based on three briefings he received from the Pentagon. It wasn't the State Department; it was the Pentagon. So the Pentagon in a three-day period reversed everything that they had presented. Rumsfeld in his book—and I'm sure I know what he told you because Don is a master of being—what I call him—third person once removed.

**Armitage:** One can imagine. *[laughter]*

**Powell:** I'm sure you read his book. On this issue he said the NSC should have given this greater consideration, thereby putting the blame on those of us who were in the NSC—to include himself, I guess. But he was really pointing at Condi, me, and everybody else. As if we didn't—As if he had nothing to do with it.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** But it was their recommendation. The Army and the Air Force were dropping leaflets on the Iraqi Army telling them drop your weapons, go home, and wait to be recalled to form the army that was going to be the security for the country. So the very means by which we were going to bring peace to the place was reconstituting the Iraqi Army. Jerry said, “Well, they’re all gone, they’ve all left.” I said, “Yes, but we want them to come back.” But we disbanded the structure, the integrity, the pride of the Iraqi Army. So there is nothing to come back to. Rumsfeld wanted to build an army that could defend the nation from outside enemies.

I said “Don, the enemy is inside, not outside. They’re not going to be invaded by anybody. The problem is inside.”

**Armitage:** That is the basis for ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria], whatever you want to call it, right there.

**Powell:** Bremer had to pay them because they were rioting and he had to pay them severance pay and they all got their severance pay, took their guns, and became ISIS.

**Riley:** So Bremer had never briefed the National Security Council on their decisions?

**Powell:** This has been analyzed very carefully. Bremer sent a memo in to the Pentagon on one day in May, I think it was the 28th, and he said, “This is what I intend to do. Here are the directives I intend to put out.” I never saw it; Rich never saw it; the President never saw it and the next thing we know Bremer has approved these directives after clearing them with Rumsfeld. If you read Jerry’s book, he says the NSC approved it. Wrong. It never got to the NSC.

I spoke to the Vice Chairman of the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] later that afternoon because I was irate. I said, “Peter—” Peter Pace—I said, “Did you guys know about this?” He said no. I said, “Did Tommy Franks—” the commander—“know about this?” He said no. “Did the commanders over there know about it?” No. It was Bremer and Bremer’s assistant, Walt Slocum, who said, “Well, you know, the people don’t like the Army, we’ve got to get rid of it.” Well, yes, what are you going to substitute for it? By then Don believed we had succeeded, so he cut off the flow of troops. The two corps commanders were sent home and their staffs went with them. I didn’t mind the corps commanders so much, except they took their staffs with them. Then they put a junior general with no experience at that level, [Ricardo] Sanchez, and made him a three-star and put him in charge of the most important military mission since Desert Storm, even more important than Desert Storm.

**Armitage:** I have to cut this off because I think the President made a correct decision here. Some people have criticized the State Department for not running the reconstruction of Iraq and everything after the invasion. The truth is quite different. The President made a decision. We have a document. There is a document, the Presidential Decision Document, to put the Pentagon in charge. The reasoning was they had troops, they had money. We still had a security problem. They had weapons and we were in a subordinate position to support them in any way we could. He made it very clear. We agreed with that decision.

**Powell:** We had to agree. The State Department doesn't know how to run an occupied country. [Douglas] MacArthur in Japan, remember? Lucius D. Clay, Germany, remember? It was the military. They have the resources, the structure, everything to do that. We didn't. So there was no argument from us. What went wrong, however, was that when we tried to help the Pentagon, they resented it.

To show you how things had really turned sour by now, I offered up to Mr. Rumsfeld seven career foreign service officers, Ambassadors, in mission—

**Armitage:** Arabists.

**Powell:** Three or four of them spoke fluent Arabic, and I offered them up to be guides to go over and help run this thing.

**Riley:** This is before the invasion?

**Powell:** No, after the invasion. They had already rejected the study work we had done.

**Riley:** Right.

**Perry:** That was on occupying?

**Powell:** Yes, what do you do after the war.

**Perry:** Exactly. And the history of that.

**Powell:** As [Douglas] Feith is fond of saying, that wasn't really a plan. No, it wasn't a plan; it was a set of considerations you'd better be thinking about. We'll come to that again in a moment. But the whole—lost my train of thought, where was I?

**Armitage:** The Arabists—

**Powell:** Later that afternoon Marc Grossman, my Under Secretary, says, "We just got called by Doug Feith and they don't want any of them." I said, "What?" He said, "They don't want any of them. Rumsfeld doesn't want any of them." I said, "What do you mean he doesn't want any of them?" He said, "They think they'd be better off putting people who really *believe* in this mission and really *believe* in what we are doing—" transforming the whole Middle East. "So, you know, they don't think that these folks would necessarily be the right ones."

So I called Don and he gives me the same answer. I said, "So you're blackballing the Ambassadors?" He said, "Well, I wouldn't put it that way." I said, "Put it any way you want. nobody is coming from the State Department; you're on your own." That broke it free, they couldn't live with that. So they took some State Department people, who did very well. They were desperately needed over there. I think three or four of the Ambassadors ultimately went over there. But that's how bad things had become.

After the fall of Baghdad, all the cautions that we had been discussing at my 5 August 2002 meeting with the President at dinner can be summarized by "If you break it you're going to own

it.” The work we did with the Future of Iraq survey—every effort we made to help was ignored because we weren’t purists. Then I think things went to the devil. We stopped sending troops in and the insurgency broke out and we pretended it wasn’t. Rumsfeld said, “This is just another Saturday night in Washington, D.C.” I said, “Don, don’t ever say that again, please.” He didn’t, but they said other things.

Feith swears in his book that it was the State Department that shot down his plan. They didn’t have a plan. They didn’t have a plan and we didn’t shoot it down. The one who shot down what they said their plan was not Colin Powell or Rich Armitage; it was the President. The President gave Bremer instructions, “You are now in charge of the country.” Jay Garner went over there and Jay kind of lost the confidence of the White House because he didn’t look the part—that was about it. Looking the part had a lot to do with this administration. He didn’t look the part so they jerked him out. Then Bremer went in and they wouldn’t let Khalilzad stay because Bremer didn’t want to have another emissary along with him. Jerry was told to go run an occupation. That’s what changed the plan, not anything the State Department did. Nor was Jerry reporting to me; he was reporting to Don.

I went in to see the President and Condi one day and I said, “You need to understand, you have created two chains of command.” He said, “What? No, I haven’t.” I said, “Yes, you have.” Condi went out to get a piece of paper and show me that I was wrong, but I wasn’t wrong. You had one chain of command coming through Sanchez back to the Pentagon and the other chain of command was Bremer back to the Pentagon. In the military we don’t like things like this; you ought to have a common superior at the point of decision. But everything went back to the Pentagon. The Pentagon was for a while like a black hole: nothing was resolved, nothing came out.

Sanchez begged for a competent staff of officers to substitute for the corps commanders’ staffs that had gone. They never gave him what he asked for. It was not right. But the initial blush of victory after the fall of Baghdad gave everybody a high. I had to go and just sit in the State Department. Then it all turned.

You may recall that Mr. Rumsfeld was a Hollywood star, the President used to kid him about it. We just sat there and then finally it turned. But it turned and the President did not do anything. Fair?

**Armitage:** I’m thinking of a time the Secretary was traveling again and I was in his seat at a Situation Room meeting. After the President left the Situation Room, he went up to his office. Then Condi left first and I followed her and Mr. Rumsfeld was behind me. There were three steps to get out to the West Wing there. Condi was on the top one, I was on the second one and Rumsfeld was on the bottom. She turned—kind of over my head—and said, “Don, would you be kind enough to contact Jerry and tell him X, Y or Z?”

So I’m standing there and Don said, “He doesn’t work for me.” She said, “What?” He said, “He doesn’t work for me.” Well, he did—the President’s directive said he did.

**Powell:** I called Condi later that afternoon—The same conversation happened at a lunch that I was at with Condi and Rumsfeld and the Vice President.

**Armitage:** Condi said, “Then for whom does he work?” He said, “For the NSC.” That is not fair, particularly in front of people. Had he said that alone, he could have the argument, but he didn’t. There were people behind Rumsfeld. You did have the same conversation?

**Powell:** With me, it was a lunch in Condi’s office, which we did occasionally. I don’t know, it was kind of a testy lunch. I forget what it was all about now.

As we got up to leave, Condi said, “Don, would you please pass this to Jerry?” The same kind of conversation. Don says, “He doesn’t work for me.” Condi was stunned. Then I said, “Well, Don, who does he work for then?” Don said, “He works for the White House.” I said, “You don’t work for a building; who does he work for?” Don repeated, “He doesn’t work for me anymore.” He left the room.

The Vice President said nothing. There was a unique relationship between the two. Remember, Cheney used to work for Don.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** So when it was over, I looked around and Cheney didn’t say anything and Condi was shaking her head. Later that day I called her and said, “Condi, do you know what you really just heard? He has abandoned his post. Have you shared this with the President?” She said yes. I said, “And?” No response. Then a few days later Condi formed a committee. She formed a committee to sort of take charge of this empty post. Who threw the biggest tantrum? Rumsfeld. I’m sure he told you all about this, of course.

**Riley:** It has been a subject of discussion, yes.

**Powell:** Well, I’m sorry, you just heard the ground truth. Because it was a problem. We had to tell Don that he was in charge of the war in Afghanistan—remember?

**Armitage:** Yes.

**Riley:** I was hoping you would get back to that, because we sort of skipped over that.

**Powell:** Go ahead.

**Armitage:** I was there that day. They were talking about who is in charge in Afghanistan—[George] Tenet and Rumsfeld, back and forth. I’m looking at it like I’m watching a tennis match. The President said, “Tiny,” which is what he called me. [*laughter*]

**Powell:** I wonder why.

**Armitage:** “What do you think about it?” I said, “Mr. President, I think, what I’m saying is it’s FUBAR [fucked up beyond all recognition].” And it was. He apparently agreed with me, because he told Condi to fix it.

**Powell:** There was a lot of that. There was a lot of, “Condi, go fix it.”

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** You would get into these situations where the President—Condi was as loyal to the President as anybody could be, but almost to the point of becoming not only a trusted agent but an enabler. She wanted to satisfy the President's desires. She had a difficult path to walk because of Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld didn't get along with her.

**Armitage:** Not at all.

**Powell:** He didn't get along with her.

**Perry:** From the beginning?

**Powell:** From the beginning. He was forever complaining to the Chief of Staff about it.

**Perry:** What was that about?

**Powell:** He didn't get along with her.

**Perry:** Why?

**Powell:** You interviewed him, you tell me. *[laughter]* I didn't realize how serious it was until much later. But he didn't get along with Condi and Condi didn't get along with him. If this hasn't come out in your interviews—

**Riley:** Oh, yes.

**Perry:** I just meant what was your perspective.

**Powell:** I was kind of watching this because I got along OK with Condi—not all the time, there were challenges—but he didn't get along with her at all. As I said to Condi, you've got two chains of command coming up to someone who doesn't think he's in the chain of command anymore. It went like that for another couple of years until 2006, when the President finally realized—Hadley and [John M.] Keane finally convinced the President he had to do something, and along came the surge.

One of the things you haven't listed on your little sheet is we wanted to negotiate a deal with the Russians on reducing nuclear weapons. This was after I had been told to—I was asked, "Is it possible to get out of the ABM [anti-ballistic missile] treaty?" I said, "Sure, you can. Mr. President. Don't do it right away. Don't do it the day after you take over; give me time to fiddle with this. You have to get out of it because it bans SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative], but let's fool with it a while."

So we did that for nine months. Then finally we hit the wall. Rumsfeld said, "We have to do testing and it will violate the treaty." That's when I went and I told [Vladimir] Putin that we're getting out. Big flap, but we managed it. It didn't turn into a crisis because we got the energy out of the issue.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** Therefore it was OK. But that wasn't always the case. When you see what we did with the Korean negotiations we talked about a little earlier, but after the ABM treaty decision, and we told him we're getting out, it was Putin who says to me—after he chewed me out—he said, “OK, we won't have to talk about this anymore. Now you and [Igor] Ivanov,” the Foreign Minister, “go off and write a new treaty.” So we worked on it for a few months. I was alone; the Pentagon didn't want a new treaty. Rumsfeld and Cheney didn't want a new treaty. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were indifferent. I was indifferent. Frankly, I preferred just to decide what you need and go unilaterally. But Putin needed a new treaty. The only way the Russians do arms control is through treaties. So the President wanted a treaty because Putin wanted a treaty, but nobody else thought it necessary.

So I essentially was all by myself, me and John Bolton of all people. Bolton was solid. When Bolton is on your team, you've got a killer; when he's against you, you've got a killer. So Bolton and I worked this. I kept getting asked about what I was doing. The Pentagon kept resisting things. I finally told the President and Condi, “Look, I will get you a treaty and I'm telling you it's going to be three pages long—no appendices, three pages long. It will sell.” The President wanted it, but I was on my own.

Cheney would say things like, “Well, you know, I don't know that we want a treaty.” I would say, “What do you mean?” He said, “Why don't we just have a House of Representatives or a Congressional joint resolution?” I said, “The Russians won't buy it.” He said, “Well, if it's a treaty, the Senate will put all kinds of reservations on it.” I said, “Not as many as 535 members of the House and Senate.” He said, “Well, I think it ought to be an Executive Agreement.” Because he was hoping to get out of it at some point in the future. I said, “That won't work.”

The President would listen to this argument; Condi would listen to it. I said, “I'm going to play some games here.” So I had the House of Representatives leadership send a letter to the White House saying don't even think about sending us something that has to be a treaty. Didn't do it, the argument was still there. Then I had the Senate write a letter saying, “I remind you, Mr. President, of the Constitution of the United States that gives treaty-making powers for approval to the Senate, not to the House.”

OK, that doesn't do it. So every time it comes up where we're in the Oval Office, there are four of us, Cheney, me, Condi, and the President. I keep raising it. We're getting closer and closer. We've got the deal. We're closer and closer to the Summit where something is going to be signed. I cannot get the President to say yes, write a treaty. Cheney keeps raising this joint resolution thing. So it's about two weeks before the Summit and I simply say to the President one day, “Mr. President, you know it's two weeks now, I have to figure out what kind of paper to put it on, so I'm going to make it a treaty.” He just took notice of that. That's the way we got a treaty. He was delighted in the Hall of St. Catherine as he and Putin signed this agreement. It was passed unanimously by the Senate—I think it was 99 to nothing, one Senator wasn't there. Just as I said.

What used to trouble me and trouble Rich, who would do things like that—We'd get our crew back from the EP3 [Navy EP-3 intel aircraft] Hainan Island caper or we would get a unanimous UN [United Nations] Resolution 1441, after six weeks of negotiation at the UN—

**Armitage:** Or you stopped nuclear war on the subcontinent—

**Powell:** Between Pakistan and India—we stopped a war. We would do these things. The President appreciated it. He would say so. But it didn't change the way we were doing business. It was bewildering.

**Riley:** I know, that's the question—I'm sort of coming back to you with a question because I'm pondering as you're telling us all of this, what is your observation about his management style or his thought process? Ambassador, you've got—

**Armitage:** I'm going to be leaving—I mean, let me paint a picture for you first.

**Riley:** Thank you.

**Armitage:** This is just a personal observation. President Bush became President because of a chad in Florida and the Supreme Court decision, so that was unprecedented.

**Powell:** By no margin.

**Armitage:** My view is he didn't know why he was President. Then 9/11 happened and all of a sudden he figured well, I was here for a reason. He was very spiritual and all that—I'm here for a reason.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Armitage:** At that time I saw a guy who at least wanted to act more decisively. Then at the midterm elections the year later, after 9/11, Republicans swept, cleaned up. So about 2002, it was finally the time the President started feeling that he was really the President. That's just my observation.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Armitage:** The combination of things made me feel that way. But at the end of the day he didn't have the courage to stand up to a good fight; he wouldn't do it.

**Powell:** He worked on instinct. Nobody can tell you when he decided to go to war; I don't know. I think it might have been years earlier. I think it really had been decided that first weekend after 9/11, when we were talking about Afghanistan and Wolfowitz starts talking about let's go do Iraq. Rumsfeld thought there were more targets there. That's what he said. But we didn't; we went to Afghanistan. I said Afghanistan. Cheney reluctantly agreed and the Chairman and the CIA all were—obvious, that's where we were hit from.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** It was just difficult to tell when he had really thought something through. Even then he said, “We’ll do Afghanistan first.” So he already had Iraq on his mind.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** The first nine months before 9/11, after every meeting we had on this I would follow him back into the Oval and I said, “Mr. President, you know you don’t need to fight a war with Iraq; they’re not really bothering us. We’ve got these no-fly zones that are not costing us much, but it is kind of annoying to have to do it every day. The pilots used to say all we’re doing up here is turning cold air into hot. But why do you spend so much time on this? Don’t let them talk you into a conflict you don’t need.” He said, “Don’t worry about it. It’s OK.”

Then 9/11 turned everything. He tended to make decisions after he thought he had all the information and then he would make them almost instinctively—frankly, as Rich said, with something moving inside of him that was somewhat spiritual. Very often he made very good decisions, but often they were instinctive. He finally I think realized that he needed to act in a slightly different way in 2006 when things were not going well. We saw it frequently.

The other thing about it—The best way to characterize him—This I’m about to say to you is from an article that Maureen Dowd wrote.

**Riley:** Not many people in the 43 administration quote Maureen Dowd.

**Powell:** That’s the difference. *[laughter]*

**Riley:** That’s my acknowledgment there, go ahead please.

**Powell:** It was obviously known throughout the press that I was not like the others, which is what I told the President. I’m not. I’m a moderate Republican at best; I’m a [Nelson] Rockefeller Republican.

**Armitage:** Never say that.

**Powell:** I’m not far over. I was surprised that the President was so far over. Rumsfeld—no. Cheney—big yes.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** He was like that when he was my boss in the Pentagon, but now he was not contained by anybody, not 41, not Jim Baker, not [Brent] Scowcroft, not me, so he could manifest his deepest feelings, and he did. More power to him; that’s what he believed. But Maureen wrote this article once about the disagreements that existed within the administration. She said, “Ah, it’s summer again and President Bush and Vice President Cheney and Mr. Rumsfeld have gone off to their ranches out west, the President to Texas, the others to Wyoming, and Colin Powell, as is usual, is up in the Hamptons swilling white wine.”

**Silverstone:** I remember that.

**Powell:** I said, “She’s got it.” That’s where I was. I’m not some rancher. But the problem with that is that there was a significant personality difference between me and the President and me and the others. I would get occasionally lectured to by Condi or somebody—and Rich did too. The reason was I don’t do a locker room, “Yeah, yeah, go get ’em.” Who said that?

**Perry:** Russell said—

**Riley:** Was it this morning? I said it was a kind of a towel-snapping—

**Armitage:** That’s exactly—

**Powell:** That’s good, that’s exactly what it was.

**Armitage:** And I got along with the President fine, by the way, because—

**Powell:** Better than I did.

**Armitage:** I’m kind of a towel snapper.

**Powell:** I’m no jock.

**Armitage:** Personally, I got along with him fine. I don’t take away my criticisms. He was never anything but gracious to me.

**Powell:** And he was always gracious to me.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** He would listen to me, I was the one who persuaded him to take the issue to the UN.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** All the others were against that. He said, “What do I do?” I said, “You’re about to own a country, the whole rule—”

**Cifrino:** The Pottery Barn rule.

**Powell:** Which I never said; it was a reporter who said that. But what I said is, “You break it, you own it. Are you sure you’re ready? It’s going to take all of the oxygen out of your administration. It’s all you’re going to be doing the rest of your tour.” He said, “Well, what do I do?” I said, “Take it to the UN, they’re the offended party, and ask for resolutions demanding that Iraq turn over—they either demonstrate they don’t have it or they admit they do. Then you have taken your case to the people.”

**Riley:** Sure.

**Riley:** Then if you have to go to war, it’s your decision, not mine.

**Powell:** That's unfortunately what happened, because the Iraqis screwed it up; they didn't do what they should have done and gotten out of it.

**Riley:** The President sends you to the United Nations.

**Powell:** Right, isn't that interesting? People say were you—did—was I the lead spokesman for foreign policy? He sent me to the United Nations. He sent me to talk to Putin. He sent me to the EU meetings. He sent me to get [Yasser] Arafat released—

**Armitage:** Twice.

**Powell:** —from jail by the Israelis.

**Armitage:** From Mukataa.

**Powell:** Yes. So it was me who was in the lead on the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. It was me who declared it unacceptable. I'm the one who was the lead man on the Rose Revolution in Georgia and they treated me like a national hero when I went there for the inauguration of [Mikheil] Saakashvili. So it was me who declared what happened in Darfur genocide. My lawyer said, "You can call it either way—it's a close call." Come on, Will, you can do better than that; give me a legal reason. He said, "I'm sorry, boss, but it's a close call, so that's what you're the Secretary for."

So I said, "It is so ugly I can't stand it; I'm going to call it a genocide." I went downstairs to the press room and I did. I told the White House I was going to do it. But it was weeks before the President would say, "I agree with what Secretary Powell said." Not, "I consider it genocide." So I think we were the spokesmen for foreign policy. The problem was that we were never in the locker room crowd.

**Armitage:** Just one thing—This is a story—

**Powell:** Does this track with what you guys have been given by the others?

**Riley:** Yes.

**Armitage:** I think this is funny. About two or three weeks after 9/11, there was an APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] meeting in Shanghai and President Bush wanted to show normalcy, et cetera, I think, so he went. The Secretary was there, Andy Card, and Condi. It was so close after 9/11 we were having daily CVTS [compressed video transmission service], the whole administration. Dick Cheney was at the Alfred E. Smith white-tie dinner—you know where this is going.

**Powell:** I know where it's going.

**Armitage:** Hadley is chairing the meeting in the Sit Room. Tenet and I are there and whoever else because we weren't traveling. Rumsfeld was somewhere. Cheney is on the TV having a CVTS in a white tie—Cheney is a pretty white guy, so it was kind of an eerie-looking image—with Scooter in the background. On the screen in Shanghai are these four characters, including

the President. They're all there, everything is fine, technology is working great, we have the meeting and all of a sudden Cheney comes over, says, "I've got terrible news, Mr. President, terrible news. There has been a ricin alert in the White House."

**Powell:** Ricin.

**Armitage:** "Anyone who was in the White House today is possibly infected and they would have X long. I've sent the only antidote—" didn't he send it to Shanghai? We're all sitting there, we've been in the White House basically all day, don't know anything about a ricin alert.

**Powell:** He was telling us we're all going to die.

**Armitage:** He's telling us we're all going to die. We're all sitting there. I know my boss—The President said, "Well, Dick, tell everybody there I'm feeling fine, I feel great." [*laughter*] I knew—It takes about six minutes to get from the White House back to my office, up the elevator, because I knew he's going to be on the phone. I walk into the office, it's 8:15 at night Washington time. He's on the phone.

**Powell:** If it was ricin, Cheney would already be dead. [*laughter*]

**Armitage:** We're all dead. It had to be nuts. You get false alarms—this was in the early days, all the time. Just to finish the story—which I think is very funny and I couldn't get Tenet to put it in his book. It was World Series time. So Tenet is home and Tenet's wife, Stephanie [Glakas-Tenet], is out somewhere. He tells me this the next day. His son said, "Dad, I know I'm supposed to go to bed, it's a school night, but can I watch the World Series with you?" Tenet says, "Well, I've just been told I'm going to die and here my only son wants to stay up with his dad and watch the World Series—"

He says, "What do you think I did?" I said, "George, I have no idea." He continued, "I said, 'Son, you're more than welcome to watch this. Don't tell your mom, but before you sit down, you see that bottle of scotch—go get the big glass and bring me that big bottle.'" It just tickled me to no end. But it's a good side of the President. It didn't faze him. I mean he moved on, did his job in Shanghai and what not.

**Powell:** The reality is—You're leaving us?

**Armitage:** Yes.

**Powell:** The reality is I think the relationship we had with the President was good. We did a lot for him, but we never—I have to acknowledge this, we never quite broke into the locker room.

When I finally—the last meeting I had with him while I was Secretary, I told him, "We've got to go." But I'm the only one who went—the white wine guy left and all the rest stayed. It was another two years before he understood—in my humble judgment—that he *had* to do something. It was only after the GOP [Grand Old Party/Republicans] lost the Senate.

**Riley:** He was going to do—?

**Armitage:** Remove Rumsfeld.

**Riley:** What was the—was there any specific event precipitating it or was it—

**Armitage:** Yes, no one on Capitol Hill would work with him at all. He was grumpy—I don't know what Condi—I had no idea what she was saying, but he was going—everyone sitting around that Situation Room table knew he was toast.

**Powell:** Yes.

**Armitage:** I realized—

**Powell:** After the invasion he was a rock star. He was out there with these press conferences almost every day now and beating up the press, not knowing that these guys would get even—and they did. Finally 2006 came along. Everyone was telling the President that something had to be done. He knew he was on the skids then—Rumsfeld. He—It came out later that he had offered to resign. I was in there one day when the President said, “He has offered several times to resign.”

**Armitage:** All the service papers came out against him, which no one had ever seen before. That gave him a longer life.

**Riley:** Is that right?

**Powell:** Because the President wouldn't fire—

**Armitage:** He said, “I can't fire in the face of this.” Every—*Navy Times*, *Army Times*, *Marine Times*.

**Powell:** They all said, “What are you doing?”

**Riley:** How early did that happen?

**Armitage:** In 2005 or early '06.

**Riley:** That's late.

**Powell:** I couldn't swear to that, but that's about right. The President might have done it if it hadn't been for the fact that all the services' *Times* had come out against him. The Congress, Democrats, had said he's got to go. When you have John McCain saying he should be fired—The President, locker room loyalty: I'm not going to do it because I'm being told to do it.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** Then he almost did it. In one of the meetings he said, when I was present, “Trouble with Don is nobody on the Hill will support him.” He had offended everybody by his attitude. The things he was saying to the troops didn't sit right when he was being asked questions about body armor and things like that. “You've got to go to war with the equipment you've got.” Yes, but you don't have to fight it for years with the equipment you've got. So he was on the skids then,

but the President wouldn't do it because it would look like he was weak. We never quite got past all that.

But I was always in good shape with the President when we were alone. But when the others were in the room, particularly Mr. Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney, when they were in the room, when there was a bigger audience in the Sit Room, then the President had to show that he was the decider.

**Armitage:** That he was the alpha male in the group.

**Powell:** That's what it was. I once said to him privately, "Mr. President,"—This is the beginning of the war. I said, "Mr. President, one of my friends has a son who is over there in a cavalry squadron and they're fighting coming up toward Baghdad." His son says, "We're having a hell of a problem, the bad guys have more ammunition than we do; they have all the stockpiles all over the country and they're just sitting there. So we're fighting an enemy that has unlimited ammunition."

So at the next meeting I raised it to Don and to the Chairman. I said, "By the way, I heard this story—What are we doing with these stockpiles?" The President said, "Yes, what are we doing with the stockpiles?" Rumsfeld threw a look at me—There you go again, you're not the Chairman anymore and you're minding someone else's business. General [Richard] Myers didn't look happy that I had said it.

A week goes by and they all come back to another meeting and at the end of the meeting General Myers says, "Well, sir, you know we looked into what Secretary Powell raised last week and I can tell you now that 95 percent—" or 92 percent—it was over 90-something—"92 percent of the stockpiles are now under control." So I've got to get back in my little place and I'm waiting for the President to say, "Then where is the ammunition coming from?" But he doesn't, he just accepts it, and the issue is gone.

**Armitage:** By the way, they were not fully under control.

**Powell:** They were not under control.

**Armitage:** When he flew into Baghdad after the invasion the whole country was littered with arms just lying there on the ground—littered with ammunition, excuse me, I don't mean arms.

**Powell:** Saddam [Hussein] had spent a lot of money—

**Armitage:** I beg your pardon; the Secretary is on his own.

**Riley:** Thank you so much. [*Armitage leaves*]

**Cifrino:** One thing I'd like to get back to, because you didn't finish your answer. You were asking how did you get picked to do the UN speech.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Cifrino:** There was a lot of stuff in the press during that time, but—and stories, some were made up and not true, but a lot of it was hey, General Powell is at 80 percent popularity ratings and credibility and believability, and the rest of them had none at the time.

**Powell:** That's what he said to me.

**Cifrino:** He said, you can take some hits to your poll numbers.

**Powell:** What he said was that—he said that once before when he was sending me over to get Arafat broken free from Mukataa after the Israelis were closing in. He asked me to do it. He said, “I know it's going to be tough and you're probably going to lose part of your butt, but you've got a lot of butt. You can afford to lose—”

**Cifrino:** I didn't know—I thought Cheney said, “You go up.”

**Powell:** Cheney also had a snotty comment about that. I think it had to do with that or something else. One day he was annoyed about something or other and he said, “You know, we're at 26 percent popularity and you're at 75, so you go do it.” Anyway, he sent me into the Mukataa to get Arafat sprung. I did that, wasted ten days as I was getting course corrections out of the White House every day, either Cheney or Condi did not like what I might be doing. I said, “Then you come over here and do it.” But I got Arafat sprung.

When the President sent me over there, he said, “It's going to be tough, but you have enough on your body to handle it.”

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** And I did. But as soon as I took off from Andrews they started undercutting me, the system. It was a very terrible ten days over there, but I got him sprung. Then to get out of there I had to sort of come up with a fig leaf to get me out of town. I said to Condi, “I'm going to announce that we're going to have a Foreign Ministers' meeting in the near future to discuss all these issues among the interested parties.”

She said, “No, no, that's a bad idea, don't do that.” I said, “Why not?” She said, “Well, we don't think that would be helpful.” I said, “Well, too bad. I've got to have some kind of fig leaf to cover me as I leave here. I spent ten days. I sat in a room with Arafat with no water, no light, candles, and AK-47s everywhere. The Israelis had left me there. The toilets don't work either.” I told Arafat, “I'm the only one—have you seen any other American official since this administration came in?” The answer is no. I said, “I'm the only one who will talk to you and I've known you for years, but you've got to give me something. If you don't give me something I can't come back.”

He says, “You are a general, I am a general, I will obey.” Lying again. So I never did go back. I did that twice—always because the President asked me. Then along comes—as Peggy says, the 5 February famous speech, which is going to be in my obituary, item number one. But at that point Congress had passed the resolution, 376 votes, far more than the First Gulf War. Hillary [Clinton], [John] Kerry, Jay Rockefeller, head of the Intelligence Committee, all are testifying in favor of it. The President gives the State of the Union address in January that uses most of the

information that was in the NIE [National Intelligence Estimate] and which I'm going to use two weeks later at the UN.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** He has already decided to go to war. He's busy telling us. He told the Saudis, he confirmed to me, confirmed to Don—this ain't working, we ought to take the guy out. He didn't say we should go to war—we've got to take the guy out. It's locker room.

So it was on the 29th of January I think, or the 30th, something like that, for my meeting. He asked, "How is it going? If I have to go to war and I think I do, will you support me?" I said, "Yes, sir. I brought you through the diplomatic process; I can't walk away now." At that point I still had hopes that we would know how to fight a war. So he said, "I need you to go make the case to the world via the UN. You have the most credibility of the whole team—frankly the only credibility of the whole team." I said, "Yes, sir, I understand."

You know it was done by the Ambassador back in the Cuban Missile Crisis days, Adlai Stevenson, but that wouldn't have worked this time. So I said, "I understand." I wasn't worried about it because the NSC had been given the responsibility to write this speech that I might have to give. So after the President said, "I want to do it next week, the fifth of February," I asked Condi, "Where is the work that has been done; where is the speech?" Late that afternoon they gave it to us. Colonel [Lawrence] Wilkerson and my speechwriter took a look at it and said, "Where did this piece of garbage come from?" We showed it to CIA and said, "Did you guys work on this?" They said, "No. We gave them the NIE and some other information and we have never heard another word back."

**Riley:** "Gave them," meaning the White House?

**Powell:** The NSC.

**Riley:** NSC.

**Powell:** I said what? So I'm still not panicking because I do have the NIE, which has been voted on by the Congress. So my guys all assemble out at CIA and they start working on it. It took four days and then we went at it—it was four days, four nights, getting rid of stupid ideas that kept being pushed in by various people. Finally got it down to about—the first idea was here is a great idea, go one day for weapons of mass destruction, another day for terrorism and then the third day for human rights or something. I said, "You've got to be kidding. It's going to be one day, over. They're not going to sit around for three days listening to me."

So we put it all in one speech, the terrorism and the human rights and all that stuff. So when my guys got through looking at the speech and realizing nothing hung together—the CIA would not stand behind any of it—we had to go and redo the whole thing. It was a remarkable piece of work. Everybody on the team worked on it. I sat there every night with George Tenet and his people beating up on them. "You've got sources for this? If it ain't multiple sourced, it ain't going in." They swore by everything.

Then we went up to New York on Monday. It was a Tuesday I gave the speech. We did another walk-through. I rehearsed it once in a conference room we had at the embassy.

**Cifrino:** At the UN headquarters.

**Powell:** Was it UN at headquarters or was it over at our mission? Maybe at the mission across the street. In any event—the intelligence guys were up until two or three in the morning verifying everything. George was calling overseas intelligence people and whatnot. I gave the speech. It was circumstantial, but it was good stuff; it sounded pretty good. It came out rather well. In fact a number of Senators have said to me, “It was because of the speech that I voted for that resolution.” No, you voted for it three months earlier.

**Perry:** They all do when they go in a vote.

**Powell:** I said “Wait a minute. Because Powell said so? No, no, you did it because you decided, and most of you never read the NIE that you asked for.” They asked for this thing. So it sounded fine.

Then weeks later my staff started seeing things. The first thing we saw were these trucks, these mobile vans, finally got one to see, which was in the main part of the presentation. They showed me a picture of it. I said, “That’s no biological van, it looks like a mess truck or a shop van.” They said, “Right. Don’t ever say it is that again.” I said, “Oh, my God.”

Then time goes by. The CIA on the 28th of May puts out a 27-page booklet with pictures showing this van in every possible configuration, swearing it is for biological weapons. I’m saying to myself, “Good God.” Suddenly it started to dribble out. The CIA didn’t even come to me directly. I heard about it from Condi that Jami [Judith] Miscik, CIA, had gone in and told the President, “Oh, by the way, you know, this spy that we had in Germany may not have been as reliable as we thought he was.” This comes back to me and I said, “What are you talking about?” That’s when the whole “Curve Ball” [Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi] thing came out.

Meanwhile we haven’t found anything, nothing, nada. It was clear that Saddam was doing a *Moscorova* as the Russians would call it, he was masking the fact that he didn’t have anything. So it all turns south, and turns south on me, “Why didn’t you know this?”

I asked George, “George, you’ve got to put out an explanation on this.” He’s giving a speech at Georgetown or somewhere and he promises me he’ll show me the speech before he gives it, but he doesn’t. He shows it to Condi; he shows it at the White House. He doesn’t show it to me. It creates a friction, a cut that still has not been healed. Then in late August of 2003, the CIA, as George is getting ready to leave, the CIA puts out a paper or speech by George, I don’t remember which, and after a lot of ah, ah, ah, we haven’t found anything, it doesn’t mean we won’t find anything, however we stand behind the judgments we made in the NIE last fall. Say that again? We stand behind the judgments we made, meaning that we stand behind what we said that was wrong. And that’s what they did.

Then they had all sorts of investigations, two big investigations that found them at fault, but the part that really made me crazy is suddenly all these CIA people start writing books. Valerie Plame—you had that in your thing. She wrote a book. In her book she says, “Can’t believe

Powell said that.” You can’t believe it? You’re in charge of WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and stuff. “No, we were shocked when we heard it; we knew it was wrong.” But it was also wrong then when the President said it in the State of the Union. So that annoyed me a little.

Then it was several years afterward, maybe within the past two or three years, that I’m talking to Condi and we’re talking about this paper that they wrote and she said, “Well, you know, we didn’t write it.” What? “No, you see what happened is, after the President—After we decided to write it months before, like February, and we had the mission, but the Vice President went in and said to the President, ‘You know, you ought to let us do it because this really has to be a legal brief, like you’re defending O. J. [Simpson] or something, or you’re defending an ax murderer, so it has to be a good legal brief, not just an intelligence product.’” So Scooter Libby, at the Vice President’s suggestion, the President’s decision, he was given the mission to write it.

So what I was handling was Scooter’s piece of work. But I’m not presenting a legal brief; I’m presenting the intelligence. I didn’t know until years after that it was Scooter who wrote it. We suspected as much because we got it from Scooter, but I didn’t know he had written it, and the NSC had nothing to do with it.

The President didn’t know who was doing it—even after he said let’s do it. Nobody had really proofed it or read it before they handed it to us for me to go play with it. But I didn’t panic, remained calm because I had the NIE.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** So we threw that away and used the NIE, which gave us good stuff. The NIE was even more definitive than my speech because I didn’t use everything in there. There’s one line—I don’t know if you’ve read the chapter on this in my book—

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** There was one line in there that I put in the chapter in my book that I didn’t really trip over until later: “We believe that the Iraqis have between 400 and 600 metric tons of chemical weapons, comma, most of which has been produced in the last year.” It’s bad enough the number is wrong and the statement is wrong, but where could they ever have gotten that it was produced in the last year, after a comma. I think it was just thrown in there to make it look better. There was no intelligence basis for that. But it was in the NIE.

That’s just another example of the kinds of things that we had to work our way through. I got some professor who wrote me yesterday—two days ago, three days ago—he has an article in *The Hill*. It is some guy out at Puget Sound University. He’s out there inhaling the fumes that come off Puget Sound and he writes an article about [Herbert Raymond] McMaster. He’s comparing me and him because we both were active-duty officers and National Security Advisors. It’s a very complimentary article. He is coauthor of a book called *Command*. He treats me very kindly in that book.

But in this article that is in *The Hill* he says, he, McMaster, did a great job. He said, “However, Powell has certain failings.” OK, I agree. Then he says, “Powell did not use independent

judgment with respect to the intelligence, and therefore he let down himself, the President, and the country.”

Now I can put up with a lot of stuff. *[laughter]*

**Riley:** We’ve never heard anything like that at the University of Virginia.

**Powell:** Well, I wrote him. Peggy doesn’t know, because she wouldn’t have let me. She protects me.

**Perry:** What did you say?

**Powell:** I said to him, “Are you still at this address?” He answered immediately, “Yes, I am.” So I wrote him last night.

**Perry:** This is via email?

**Powell:** Email. I wish—I hoped—He can use it any way he wants to, but I said, “Let me tell you what I did to get ready for this. Let me tell you I did it and let me tell you that the President, every Cabinet officer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CINC [Commander in Chief] running the battle, the Vice President, and the 376 member of Congress *all* then deceived themselves, the President, and the United States of America.”

But the other one that got me was Mike Morrell. He was Acting DCI [Director of Central Intelligence] a couple of times. He wrote this book and he made a point of sending me this one paragraph in the book where he is talking about how it got all screwed up. He closes the paragraph by saying, “I apologize to Secretary Powell for what we did.” I just let it be known he doesn’t owe an apology just to me; the apology should go to the President, should go to the country, should go to the international community. Don’t give me this “I apologize to Secretary Powell.” I’ve had to live with this thing. Barbara Walters was the first one who got it out of me. Remember that day?

I said, “Yes, I regret it. It will always be with me, but it will be with the people who voted for this three months before, but it wasn’t me; I wasn’t there.”

**Riley:** Let me say that I think your assertion that it will be the first line in your obituary is not going to prove to be correct.

**Powell:** There’s one other issue that you didn’t raise while Rich was here and you had in your list of things, and that was the Plame affair.

**Riley:** That’s exactly right.

**Powell:** [Robert] Novak writes an article that talks about Valerie. Don’t pay much attention to it. Then heat rises on the President with respect to that whole nuclear material stuff coming out of Niger. So he wants an investigation. OK, have an investigation. I had nothing to do with it. I don’t know why Plame’s husband was sent over there. Our Ambassador had already told us that there was nothing to this issue.

Then Novak comes under heat to prove it or do more. He doesn't want to give away his sources because that's against the rules, but he writes another article that is a little more definitive as to whom he got it from. The morning it comes out—I think it was the second of October—I could check that. I'm sitting in my office at the usual time, 6:30, the phone rings. It's Rich, and he says, "It's me." I said, "What's you?" He said, "He's talking about me, I just remembered. He came in to do an interview. We talked about a lot of things and as he was getting up to leave he asked about this." I said, "Yes, that's Valerie Plame, she works over at the CIA and her husband went." Rich may have said a little too much. So he said, "It was me." I said, "Get in here;, we'd better talk." He said, "I'll be in later."

I said, "Rich, don't put your head on the chopping block unless we're sure." So I get hold of my lawyer, Will Taft. Will comes in, we look at it, we talk about it. Another one of my trusted agents, Ken Duberstein, I call him for political advice all the time. Within an hour or two we know that Rich is right, that he did do this. But it was incidental; it was not anything plotted. So Will and I decide well, what do we do? We'd better get the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] over here right away, because they're the ones investigating it.

Will says, "I'll call the White House counsel, [Alberto] Gonzales. I'll call Al Gonzales and tell him that we have an issue here, an information piece that we're going to give to the FBI because the President told us all to 'fess up."

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** He says to Al, "Would you like to know what it is or any more about it?" Al correctly says, "No, keep it out of the White House; it's the FBI." So we call the FBI. The next morning the FBI comes. They talk to me first and I give them the exact scenario of what happened the day before, and then they go and talk to Rich. He just says, "Yes, this is what I did and this is how I did it." So that's it; he's devastated. He takes things very seriously. He's feeling really bad about it. He wouldn't tell you this, but he wrote a note of resignation that I threw in my desk; I don't know where it is, I think I burned it or did something with it, but I certainly didn't use it because I didn't think he did anything wrong.

Plame claimed that she was undercover. Novak found her in *Who's Who*. That's where he got it. He confirmed who she was. She is publicly driving into the CIA every day and she's got a title and an office. So if this is undercover, I'm surprised. She is no longer in a position where she has to be undercover. She is married to a very prominent lawyer. They just had twins and she's all over town.

The FBI and I spent a lot of time talking about it all. They leave, but as they're leaving I say to them, "You do realize, guys, I hope, no crime has been committed. There is no crime here. She's not under active cover." The only way they knew she was undercover is that the CIA, in accordance with the procedures, every time they see something that looks like somebody's cover has been blown, they write a report to the Justice Department. That's how they got it. Tenet didn't even know they'd done it, because it's a routine thing.

So time goes by and the FBI continues to look into it. We told them what we did. So what's the FBI looking for? What they're looking for is the people in the White House who did it. They got Rich; they had him on Day One.

**Cifrino:** Then didn't the FBI tell you and Rich not to discuss it with anyone?

**Powell:** Yes, don't discuss it.

**Riley:** That's was what I was raising.

**Powell:** They told us not to discuss it. Better, the White House didn't want to know it. So I don't tell the President that Rich has done this and I don't do anything because we know what Rich did, the FBI knows. If the FBI knows, then the Justice Department knows whatever they're telling the Justice Department.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** Then a funny thing happened in the White House. The press spokesman—what was his name? We'll think of it. The press spokesman is being beat up about this; he wrote a book about it.

**Riley:** Ari? Ari Fleischer?

**Cifrino:** No, he was gone.

**Riley:** McClellan, Scott McClellan

**Powell:** Yes, McClellan. Scott McClellan is getting beat up about it. So he asks the people who are suspected of having done this—Scooter and Karl Rove—do you guys know anything about this? “No, no, nothing, nothing.” They give him categorical denials, which he goes and gives to the press. They start to come apart over time. So that's when I realize, hey, the FBI isn't after Rich; they've got him. They know what he did and there's nothing there. But now they've got these guys in the trick bag—Scooter and Karl. But these guys are now in the trick bag. So the damn thing goes on for two years. I went to court.

**Perry:** Grand jury?

**Powell:** Yes, I went before the grand jury. They want to know my relationship with Rich. I almost broke down talking about it. But two years go by and I don't know what's going on; I don't want to know. Finally the guy—[Patrick] Fitzgerald, who was a brilliant guy and he came to see me when he got appointed, so I did the story all over again. I said to him, “I don't think any crime has been committed, but go ahead.” He said, “I'm not here to find a crime or to blame anybody for anything, I'm here to just find out what happened.” So that went on for a while.

Finally he brought the whole thing to a conclusion and charged nobody but Scooter. Scooter was not charged with anything having to do with Valerie Plame; Scooter was charged for lying to the FBI. But of course the Vice President and his people think that Rich and I are the guilty people for not throwing Rich under the tracks on Day One. We did, but that's not who the FBI was

looking for. They knew that stuff had come out of the White House, and the difference between what Rich did and what Karl and Scooter and others might have done is they actually called the press to leak. Rich's thing was incidental; he was just shooting his mouth off with Novak.

**Riley:** And he spoke directly and honestly to the FBI.

**Powell:** We called them. They might never have known—they probably knew it or certainly Novak knew it was Rich, and he was telling us they're getting close. He would have protected his sources to the death; that's Novak. But Rich realized it was him and that's who Rich is. He is straight as the day is long. So he turned himself in and was ready to resign. I wouldn't let him. I needed him. The Department needed him, not me. He was not going to resign. I never told him that, I just threw out his resignation letter. The President never called us to account for that. Cheney has never forgiven us, and Scooter, who I see from time to time—I'm sorry he got convicted; I'm sorry he had to be—not get too much punishment but he lost his ability to practice law. President Bush would not pardon him.

**Perry:** Then he and the Vice President came to terms over that, right? The Vice President wanted him pardoned.

**Powell:** There were other factors—toward the end—the Vice President said in his book and has said it publicly, you don't leave your people on the battlefield. What battlefield are you talking about? Scooter was found guilty of lying. You expect the President to overlook a lie? I was thinking the President would do it; I wouldn't have cared one way or another. I felt sorry for Scooter, whom I knew quite well, but the President felt he couldn't do it, wouldn't do it. Condi and the President—she is still his enabler and his best pal, buddy, and that's who you go to if you want to get to him. That's the Plame affair. Anything else you wanted to know about that?

**Riley:** No, I don't think so, I appreciate that narrative. I guess the follow-up question is just about—Rich has a reputation for talking to the press.

**Powell:** Yes.

**Riley:** Is that—That's it? That is a legitimate—?

**Powell:** Rich has a reputation for talking to anybody who'll listen to him. *[laughter]* He talks to the press more than I ever do and he has contacts that are invaluable to me. So I always know what he has heard and I pick it up. But Rich does have that proclivity.

**Riley:** There was some aggravation expressed—not just in interviews—

**Powell:** It's worse than that. In his—it starts with Feith.

**Riley:** He starts with Feith?

**Powell:** Doug Feith. He wrote a book that borders on ridiculous. In his book he claims that we threw out the model that he had put in place to run the country. No, we didn't; the President threw it out. But he blames us. The State Department—

**Riley:** Run the country, running—?

**Powell:** Iraq. The State Department is always the enemy for these people—and CIA. They don't like CIA either. So he writes this in the book, that we were responsible for all of this. Then he puts in the book—let me make sure to get this right—that he hears that Powell talks to the press a lot, and that therefore Powell was not supporting the President. What is the logic of this now? Read a logic book and you'll see where the problem is.

He hears through the press that Powell is not supporting the President. So Feith is talking to the press. And, if Powell is not supporting the President, he should resign, he should have resigned. He puts this in his book. The book goes nowhere and when he gets on television he's terrible, because he can't explain anything he said.

Then Cheney, when he writes his book, uses a similar formulation: It's probably good that Powell left because he talks to the press. If you can't support the President, et cetera. Rumsfeld does the same thing, in spades with all kinds of ways that he goes into third person once removed. The amusing part of it is that once the President and I had our conversation in January and he asked me and I said, "Mr. President, you're the Commander in Chief. I told you to try and solve this diplomatically through the UN; they're the offended party. We got a resolution that didn't work. If you think it is necessary to go to war, I'm with you." My disappointment is what came later in the way the war was handled.

I can say that to Dick or to Feith or to Rumsfeld right here, if they were here today, from that day you never heard me do anything but support the President. Feith even goes to the extreme of saying, "If Powell really didn't support the President, he should have spoken up at these meetings, and he never said in any one of these meetings that he didn't support the President." Does that tell you something, Doug? No. It's amazing.

So if I didn't support the President, would I have been the one to go to the UN? But that doesn't make any difference to them. They believe what they believe. But I'm still here.

**Perry:** You've explained so well the personalities of all of these players, but can we come back to moderate General Powell and the Vulcans and the neocons. Was so much of this inevitable because of those ideological differences in addition to the personality issues?

**Powell:** Probably, because I was not ideological. I don't think I've ever been ideological. I voted for Lyndon Johnson, I voted for Carter, then I voted for Reagan twice. I voted for Bush repeatedly—four terms' worth. I voted for Obama. I voted for Obama twice. I wouldn't vote for Donald Trump if my life depended on it—can't, couldn't. So I supported Hillary. I said I would vote for Hillary and I gave the reasons why. I am a professional officer still; I'm still an infantry officer. I always try to find out what I think is right. That's the way I do my work and that's the way I have voted over the years. That's the way I worked as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that's the way I was National Security Advisor and the way I was Secretary of State. It is the way I approached my job as Secretary of State. I'll try to give you the best answer, the right answer. You may not like it, but I could not be part of this ideological wing that is now—that we are seeing in spades in the current administration, where you have to defend with alternative facts. I just try not to do that; I'm sure I've done it on occasion.

I've got my checker here, fact checker.

**Riley:** You made a comment earlier and I don't remember exactly what it was—it was about Cheney's claim about the battlefield and you had a very visceral reaction to that. A lot of people you were dealing with in this administration didn't have your military experience. They were "chicken hawks," that's the term. Was that difficult for you? Did you find it sometimes problematic to be talking—?

**Powell:** That allows me to tell you one story. No, because I'm the Secretary of State, I'm not the Chairman anymore. Nobody really had to remind me of that, so I was always very cautious because I was a rather strong Chairman and I didn't want to undercut Dick Myers or Peter Pace. I didn't feel like arguing with Don, who was suspicious of me all along.

But as we were getting closer to the war in Iraq, I got very uneasy after what is almost always a military briefing. What happens afterward? Do we know what's going to happen? I don't know what is going to happen afterward, but my training says you take out insurance. Since you don't know what is going to happen, that's the time to take out insurance. So I didn't think they were doing that. They did not have a plan for what happens after Baghdad falls.

President Bush used to worry about it, but he didn't worry about it sufficiently to tell them, "What are you going to do?" He believed that suddenly a government would snap back in place and democracy would break out. No. You're going to have Shi'a and Sunnis at each other with Kurds in the middle and the Iranians everywhere. But it didn't sink in, because that was not what the Vulcans believed. They wanted to believe that this was the beginning of a sweep throughout the entire Middle East of democracy. They won't agree to this one—ultimately strengthening Israel's position. Get rid of all of Israel's enemies by making democracies.

I thought that this was far-fetched, but it really was something that was believed in the Pentagon and I think it was the hope of the President. It troubled me. Where was I going?

**Cifrino:** You called over to the Pentagon, was that where?

**Powell:** I'm coming to that; give me one more minute. So I kept saying, "Well, I'm not sure," when they were all saying, "We've done it! We created a democracy in the middle of nowhere." While all this is getting ready and I don't know what is going to happen and I think we need an insurance policy, I call Tommy Franks; Tommy is the CINC. I'm out of channels; I have no business calling him. I'm the Secretary of State, not a former Chairman.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** But I call him. You can read the whole account in his memoirs, page 273 if I'm not mistaken.

So I call Tommy and I say, "Hey, Tommy, I'm a little out of channel here, but let's be general to general. Tommy, do you have enough troops for this? I think it's light. I don't know what you're going to find once you get to Baghdad. We're worried about all kinds of things and I don't think you have put enough troops in place to deal with we don't know what." One of the divisions that's supposed to be there, he has them encircling from the north coming through—wanted to

send them through Turkey, and I couldn't get that. I never wanted it. The Turks would not have tolerated an American division moving through Turkey to attack Arab brothers, Muslim brothers. So he had them sitting around the Mediterranean waiting to go into the north and protect the oil fields. Always worry about the oil fields. I thought it should have moved around to go in to the front and be that reserve; he had no reserve.

So I said all these things to him. He said, "Thanks very much, I appreciate it." I knew he'd immediately call Rumsfeld, which he did. He tells in his book what he said to Rumsfeld. He said, "You know, I have great respect for General Powell, and General Powell called and said these things to me, but you know General Powell is in a different age and he has this doctrine of overwhelming and decisive force and large—With your transformation, Mr. Secretary, we can do it with much less," and dah, dah, dah. They had 500,000 for the First Gulf War and that was the plan for the Second Gulf War, left there by Tony [Anthony] Zinni, General Zinni, which they threw away. They've got to go in light. It was for the purpose of 1) achieving the mission, but also demonstrating the new concept and the transformation of the Pentagon away from—frankly, the way I used to do it.

My own view was yes, light will take Baghdad—and it did. But then what? There was nothing else and it wasn't clear what was happening after that. So Tommy essentially dismisses my concerns. Rumsfeld says to him—according to Tommy—"Well, let's just raise this all to the President on Monday and see what he says." They said that's what they did. I don't remember it myself, but I guess I was there, or Rich was there. They say, "Secretary Powell has a different concern, a different idea, but we think this is a good plan."

The President did, in a setting like that, exactly what I knew he would do. He accepted the judgment of his commander, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretary of Defense and not his Secretary of State, who is fooling around in something he is no longer supposed to be fooling around in. I think it was a strategic mistake of the first order. The second strategic mistake was disbanding the Army and the Ba'ath Party, and not realizing you'd gotten into a new war and everybody thinking it's just a few—what were Cheney's famous words? "Just a few dead enders."

Then when the UN emissary got killed, that should have been the trigger that said, "Oh, my God, what have we gotten into?" But it wasn't. Sergio—

**Cifrino:** Wolfowitz's line, no Rumsfeld's line, was, "It's just a few thugs."

**Powell:** A few thugs, dead enders is what Cheney said. Thugs could have been used. In other words, it wasn't—This is not an insurgency.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** Then it was—I think General [George] Casey, or it might be the other one, not Casey but [John] Abizaid, one of them said it, "This is an insurgency." Rumsfeld said, "No, it's not." Abizaid said, "I'm sorry, we are in an insurgency." Rumsfeld finally had to blink and agree to it; but he shot it down because he didn't—it was not supposed to be an insurgency, therefore there isn't one.

One of the corps commanders, the reason he got sent home—after we had gotten around Baghdad—there was still fighting going on—On a Saturday morning one or two or three weeks after the fall of Baghdad, this corps commander—I think it was the guy from Germany—he said to a media person, “Well, you know, there’s a lot more here than we thought there would be—a lot more trouble than we thought there would be.” He was on his way home in a couple of days. It was not what was supposed to be happening.

President Bush said to me as the troops were moving north toward Basra and past Basra, heading to Baghdad—We were watching the television one day in the outer room of the White House in the little reception area where there was a television set. He watched the people in the street and the troops moving and what not. He turned to me and said, “They’re not cheering.” I said, “No, Mr. President, they’re not.” He expected and was hoping for mass outpouring of democratic support and we love America. The only thing he got was a statue being pulled down and then everything started to go in the other direction. But he expected to be greeted as liberators; he said it repeatedly.

**Silverstone:** I was going to ask—

**Powell:** You haven’t talked to him yet, but that’s what he thought was going to happen and that’s what he was not led to believe, but what he wanted to believe.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** I didn’t see it.

**Riley:** And the people who were convincing him of that are not people who had been in the position you’ve been in, of combat.

**Powell:** True. But we had a whole lot of generals and admirals on the joint staff who should have known better. You don’t take to the most important mission you have going, a fine young officer commanding a division, General Sanchez, who is a division commander, and suddenly put him responsible for a theater of war, the most important military operation going on anywhere. Who picked—? Then Don in his book—You ought to read his book and Sanchez’s book. Don in his book says, “I don’t know why the Army recommended him” or “why the Army selected him.” I think he said “selected.” You have to read the book.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** He interviewed him. Sanchez had an interview with the Secretary of Defense. Now I would still ask the question, Army, why’d you pick him? But it’s not like Rumsfeld didn’t know about it. Sanchez in his book said, “I interviewed with him for hours or an hour or two.” So he is one honked-off young general who is left holding the bag on all of this.

The other, the third strategic problem I would put down is that Sanchez and Bremer didn’t get along. So they didn’t get along, they argued with each other. They didn’t appreciate or respect one another, and guess what? There’s no common superior there to resolve issues. You had to go to the Pentagon, to somebody who said he’s no longer in charge.

One thing on this one, when Condi created the committee to try and bring some order to this, Don went public, attacking her and the committee. The committee continued with Hadley playing an important role. Zal was back now because he was canned by Bremer. But it was still another two years before Hadley, and Keane, and others went out and came back in. If I were the Chairman, I'd have been devastated if it took some guy who was retired to tell the President what needed to be done. This is not the Joint Chiefs' finest hour.

**Silverstone:** It's an interesting institutional collapse there, but the question I did want to ask was about the President and the questions that he's asking. Is he asking questions? When does he start to ask more questions? What ended up prompting that, because we hear from so many about the President and how on top of things he is or how quick he is, how intelligent he is. That's a running theme. I'm interested in his curiosity.

**Powell:** You didn't see it manifested that often in the public. He would manifest it in this way: How much oil is flowing? Is the electricity back on? Is this happening, is that happening? But with respect to the military operation, I think he was just not that curious. Maybe it was his lack of experience with it or he felt I have guys who worry about this for me. A former Secretary of Defense is my Vice President, they're very close.

It used to surprise me, since Dick was a successful Secretary of Defense. He would see all of these things—maybe you guys can divine the relationship that existed between him and Mr. Rumsfeld, but he saw all these things but he didn't react the way I and others had reacted. I never quite got to the bottom of that; maybe you will. I can't get to the bottom of it. It was long after I left that the President realized, *Oh, my God*.

He was told by Hadley—Hadley, remember, did the famous report. Have you talked to Hadley yet?

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** Then he had the advice of Jack Keane, who was retired. But between those two guys, maybe some others that I'm not aware of, they demonstrated to the President that you're losing. But until then—Did it take that long for the President to realize it? I don't think so. He must have known it by then, but there were people in there who were willing to speak back to him. They were not coming out of the Vice President's office or the Pentagon, only Hadley. Hadley also I think was very loyal to the President, but he was not Condi, so he put a different spin on it.

**Riley:** I suppose if you're trying to make a favorable interpretation of the President's own path on this—You and Mr. Armitage both mentioned the importance of his faith—I think he must have had some sense of his own destiny in pursuing this. Then after 9/11 the consequences of being wrong were so profound that maybe you talk yourself into things that are not well advised in terms of policy; you just hope it will all come out in the wash.

**Powell:** I cannot tell you and I don't think anybody can tell you why and when and what actually moved him to decide that Iraq had become the number one issue. It could have stayed there to this day. But we couldn't prove there were no weapons of mass destruction.

**Riley:** One of the most interesting things you've said was your characterization about maintaining the no-fly zone. I've been very curious about that. We put the question occasionally to people, but it was your sense that you could have kept Saddam in a box for a while.

**Powell:** He was in a box. The no-fly zone was there to protect the Kurds in the north and the Shi'a to the south, but I wasn't sure that we really needed to do that anymore. They really never tried to seriously shoot down a plane; I don't think they wanted to get into that problem with us. But I can't prove that.

The President would say—and I think he said it more than once, “Democracy is God’s gift to humanity.” Even our founding fathers didn’t quite say that. Our founding fathers were very careful, they never used the word “God.” They never used “Jesus.” In the Declaration of Independence it is “Creator,” “divine providence.” The Constitution does not have the word “God”—I don’t think it’s anywhere in the Constitution—because that’s not the basis of the nation.

**Riley:** Let me ask you this, because I know we’re reaching our time—

**Powell:** Three hours. Come on. I gave you two days in three hours.

**Riley:** We’re going to keep going until you run us out. But what I didn’t want to do, having focused on what you think the first line of the obit is going to be, and we spent a lot of time on these trouble areas, I want to talk a little bit about what you consider to be some of the great successes of your time there.

**Cifrino:** That’s a great topic.

**Riley:** It’s too bad that Mr. Armitage isn’t here, but Peggy, I’m going to ask you to push him a little bit on these things.

**Powell:** Our unmitigated success was what we did to the Department. We came in from units, we commanded units, Colonel Green, Colonel Kelly, Admiral this, Captain that, Rich Armitage, Academy graduate, six years in Vietnam. So we came in from units and we came in from a philosophy of followers and putting followers in the best possible—I don’t want to be tough on Madeleine, but the Department was in trouble. Madeleine knew it; she told me very candidly that she was having trouble with the foreign service. She was in trouble with the Republicans on the Hill. I was not going to have that problem.

So we did lots of things. We created a leadership institute at the Foreign Service Institute to start teaching our Ambassadors how to run an embassy. We had civil servants. Civil service is the largest component of the State Department, and they’re very minority oriented here in Washington—a lot of black people. There are more black people in civil service than there are in foreign service. There was no training for them. So we started a training program for civil service managers.

**Cifrino:** Can I insert one thing here? You don’t even know it yet. FSI [Foreign Service Institute] called me yesterday. They’re celebrating their 70th anniversary and I got a call from FSI asking me: “Do you think General Powell would do an interview with us about leadership and training?”

Because there is *no* one, let me repeat, *no* one, who has done more for the Department in leadership and training, and everyone knows it. I was a young officer when I was there under him, and we'd love to have him—"

**Powell:** We could really get bragging here, and I'm very proud of it.

**Riley:** I'm happy to indulge you.

**Powell:** I swore in 147 people.

**Cifrino:** To Ambassadorships.

**Powell:** To Ambassadorships or to appointments in the Department or 101 classes, the new foreign service officers. We always did it in the Ben Franklin room. I said to them, "This is like a confirmation. This is like a change of command ceremony in my military terms." Whenever I was in town I did it. On the few exceptions I wasn't here, Rich did it. On two occasions I think Grant Green might have done it because we weren't there.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** That meant a lot to them. I bought 44,000 computers. I put a computer on every desk and they still talk about it, and put them online. I was on email and I wanted them to be on email. Nobody ever walked in, even though they probably should have, and said, "You know, you're violating the National Archives records—" Get out of here. I had to bring the Department into the 21st century.

They had rules there that said we're going to move this to OMB. We fixed all of that. We increased the budget of the Department. We increased foreign assistance by two—times three in Africa, PEPFAR [President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief], all kinds of things that I think we succeeded in doing. I'm very proud of that, number one.

Secondly, if you went through everything I said for four years that I don't remember. Look it up. You can find out everything I said—because there are a lot of things I forgot. I don't remember meeting with So-and-So, I don't remember the Adriatic Charter that I shepherded. The Orange and Rose Revolutions I remember very well because I was honored by the two countries. A lot of things with Russia. The expansion of NATO. We had excellent relations with the Chinese and with the Russians.

The EP3 thing in China gave us an opening. Once we resolved it diplomatically and I got the crew out, my Chinese colleague and I became the best of friends. I visited China a few weeks after the crew came back, while Rumsfeld was still trying to get the plane. I said, "Don,"—we work and we get the crew out by making a cute deal—"Sorry for what happened." We don't apologize, we're not going to apologize, they won't apologize, I say, "We're sorry." They said that almost works, but give us more—so "We're very sorry." That did it, the crew came home.

Then I went back to negotiate the release of the airplane and Don threw a fit. He didn't like that I got the crew out. He said, "That's our plane. I want to get that plane fixed; I want to fly it out of there." The President said, "Don wants to do it, so let Don do it." I don't care about the plane; I

got the crew. I said, “Mr. President, the Chinese will never, in this lifetime let that plane take off from Hainan Island. So it’s coming home in FedEx boxes.” *[laughter]* Would we let a Chinese plane that landed unannounced at Andrews Air Force Base take off from Andrews Air Force Base?

**Cifrino:** Look at it from the other country’s perspective.

**Powell:** That’s my great fault; I’m always putting myself in the position of the other guy. What does he need to make a deal?

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** Don wouldn’t yield on it. Weeks went by and then finally they kind of quietly sent crews over there and they cut it up. He said, “We’ll put it back together when we get it here; it will fly again.” You can’t put a plane back together that you just hacksawed apart. Then he got into a fight with the Chinese over the bills to be paid for our folks staying in the BOQ [Bachelor Officers Quarters] for 13 days. I just watched this. The President said, “Don wanted”—OK.

**Riley:** But that’s a very good early sign that things aren’t—

**Powell:** Don and I got into a fight in Australia one day. This was within the first couple of months. I knew from that point on this marriage was not made in heaven.

**Riley:** Tell us.

**Powell:** It’s the annual joint U.S.-Aussie meeting. The Secretary of State leads a delegation that includes the Secretary of Defense. We went to Australia. Showed up in two different planes because he’s going somewhere else and I’m going somewhere else. The meeting goes well. Don is very quiet. He doesn’t interrupt, he doesn’t interfere. He’s kind of sitting there slightly sullen and the meeting goes very well.

After the meeting we’re doing the press interview. The press is there, just four of them. We’re talking. They smell something, so they say, “Well, how’s it going between you two?” I said, “It’s fine.” They say, “Mr. Rumsfeld?” He says something like, “He’s a young man and he’s learning.” That became the story. We had issues like that from then on; these little digs. But it was not only with me; it’s his style.

**Cifrino:** Condi.

**Powell:** And the snowflakes. We just stopped answering them.

**Cifrino:** Incoming snowflakes.

**Riley:** He was sending snowflakes—?

**Powell:** Until the end. They were mostly cover-your-butt stuff. You know, the 13 points about Iraq that we have to watch out for. I’m sure he took great credit for that one. But he didn’t do anything to cover the 13 points he said we had to watch out for. He proudly said, “Well, I told

the President what might go wrong.” Yes, but you didn’t do anything to ensure against what might go wrong. He’s very proud of that; it’s all over his book.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** So we never really quite got along well after that. It was obvious, everybody could see it. He always thought we were leaking to the press.

Don was masterful—and I would say this if he was here—he was masterful at sort of diverting you from whatever it is that you’re asking him about.

**Riley:** Yes?

**Powell:** I kiddingly call it third person once removed. But you start down a certain trail and the next thing you know you’re into the known and the unknown and it doesn’t make any sense, but he runs the clock on it. So after a while they were really looking for answers and not digressions.

**Riley:** Right. I diverted your attention because you were telling us about—

**Powell:** What was I telling you about?

**Riley:** About the major successes. We dealt with the Department.

**Powell:** I haven’t been focusing on these because we were supposed to be talking about the President. They were his successes. But we—the Moscow Treaty doesn’t get enough credit. PEPFAR and the other global infectious diseases thing we did is deserving credit.

**Riley:** You had a big part of the action on that as well?

**Powell:** Yes, I started it. The first day I was Secretary I ran into—I had a study in my reading file about HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome]. I immediately called the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson, and said, “Geez, have you seen some of this stuff, Tommy?” He said yes. “We’ve got to talk to the President.” So he and I went in to see the President and we agreed to support the UN global initiative. Then a year or so later the President wanted to really ramp it up and that’s when PEPFAR came in.

**Riley:** Right.

**Powell:** The group he formed that does development assistance?

**Cifrino:** Millennium.

**Powell:** Millennium Challenge Corporation I think was a great success. Unfortunately, it’s not getting the kind of money it should get and it’s not going to get it with this new team, but that was a fundamental change in how we do things with countries. Prove that you have corruption under control, the rule of law is there, and you tell us what projects you need and we’ll try and fund it for you. I’m very proud of that.

I'm very proud of Plan Colombia. Very satisfied that we were able to create good relations with Moscow—I said this a moment ago, but let me illustrate it. After we got the crew out—I digressed there—I'm in China with the Foreign Minister at a meeting of some kind. After the meeting I ask him to come over in the corner for a minute, so myself, Foreign Minister Tang [Jiaxuan], and the interpreter. I said, "Please tell the Minister that we almost had a crisis over this plane and we should always try to make sure that an incident doesn't become a crisis. This means that we have to talk as soon as it happens, as soon as it breaks out." I said, "I want you to know that I am always available to you; here is my home phone number. Feel free to call me 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You don't have to go to the State Department. I don't need anybody else around when you call. Please, I'm not kidding."

He was disbelieving. I said, "I'm serious." They tested it a few times and it worked. I didn't care whether he called or not, I just wanted him to know that that was our relationship.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Perry:** When you say tested it—on real matters?

**Powell:** Called me.

**Perry:** Real matters or were they just saying—?

**Powell:** A couple of times he called me directly.

He leaves; he finally moves on and another guy comes in, Minister Li [Zhaoxing]. He and I had a similar relationship and I told him what he could do. We became quite close. I always mix it up with these guys. One more point on China and then I'll go—I'll go to Tang and then I'll go to Li.

**Riley:** OK.

**Powell:** When we were going through the resolutions on Iraq and what to do, we're at the UN. I'm at the UN damn near every day for weeks on this resolution. One day Tang calls me aside in the corner and he says, "My friend, we think you're wrong. We do not think that there is a sufficient cause to go to war. So you need to know that we cannot support you going to war. But this is your decision; it is your country, your President, your interests, and has nothing to do with us, so we will not veto or vote against. We will abstain because we don't want to affect our relationship with you."

What he meant was, "Hey, we're China, we don't worry about stuff like this," and they don't. They're the center of the world. They say: "If you guys want to go have a war, have a war. We go to countries and ask them, you want a hospital or a new Presidential palace? They say Presidential palace, that's what they get. Hospital? We don't care. We don't moralize." They don't moralize about things like we do. But he said, "We'll abstain, we won't get in your way if you think you want to do this stupid thing." That's what he was saying.

Anyway he goes and Li comes. One day—it's a Saturday morning—I'm sitting in my little home office, in my bunker as we call it. Alma [Powell] is out. She's got these two little Yorkies that are a real pain. So the doorbell rings while I'm on the phone with Li. Li calls me directly to talk

about something. He's home. So the dogs start barking; I can't hear a thing. [*sound effects*] He has 16 people listening in with him, of course. So I say, "Mr. Minister, I'll be right back, the dogs are barking, Alma is not here, I'll be right back." So I put the phone down, go up to the door, it's FedEx. I open the door, sign the thing, pick up the phone again. I say, "That was the mailman, FedEx, I'm back now, what were we talking about?" He's laughing his butt off. The Chinese talked about it for a long time. They thought it was the nicest thing that we had that kind of relationship that I could actually put my phone down and nobody on the U.S. side is listening to this conversation because it's a direct call to my home phone.

**Riley:** Sure.

**Powell:** But I reported it fully. They never took advantage of that.

**Perry:** What did he want?

**Powell:** I don't remember; I don't remember yesterday. But it was like that. Or the previous President of China—which one was it? Anyway, I'm Secretary of State and he's the Vice President and he has come for his first get-to-know-you visit in Washington. He's as nervous as can be; he does not want to make a mistake. So he's just reading the party line, very boring. We have dinner at the State Department, a big dinner.

I'm trying to make small talk. I said, "You came down here from New York; how was the New York trip?" He said, "Very good." I said, "What did you do there?" He said, "I spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations and other think tanks." That's it. I said, "Did you look at New York? Did you see anything?" He said, "No, very busy." I said, "Well, then, you didn't see New York." I said, "It's my home town. You can't do that. You can't come to New York and just do that." So now he's engaged.

**Riley:** Yes.

**Powell:** I said, "You come back and go to New York another time and when you come, forget the Council on Foreign Relations. You've got to see my city. So when you come next time, I'm going to come up and take you around. We're going to go to the Statue of Liberty, take you up to my alma mater, the City College of New York. We'll go look at the sites, we'll do two Broadway shows. We'll go to Macy's and Tiffany." The translator is fascinated. So he's smiling now.

I said, "You mean your wife—What did she do?" They took her—This is the church, this is—I said, "And the last thing we're going to do is my favorite thing to do when I'm in New York. We're going to go have a hot dog." He said, "What?" I said, "You know, every street corner has a hot dog vendor; New York hot dogs are different from anything in the world. I always have one. So when you come up, we'll do all these things and then I'm going to take you to a street corner, on the pushcart, and we're going to have a hot dog." They translate it and he's laughing.

I saw him many times after that. He became the President; I'm no longer the Secretary. I'm at a dinner or a lunch for him at the State Department and I'm in the back of the room, where I belong. So he's at the head table with, I guess, Hillary. Halfway through it, he sees me. As the thing is ending, he tells the guy, "I want to see General Powell." So I run up in front of Hillary

and everybody else and they start—He speaks just a little bit of English. We say how are you, good to see you, how's the wife, how's the family. He says, "When we do hot dog?" [laughter] That's diplomacy. He never forgot it. That's diplomacy. And that's still the way I'm remembered in China.

**Cifrino:** Then you did the hot dog with [Michael] Bloomberg.

**Powell:** This is—It has nothing to do with anything. This is funny. Mayor Bloomberg is running again; he's running for the third time I guess now—no, this is the second time. I did something else; I did the Jamaican Day parade the third time.

He wants me to come up. His staff says, "Can you come up and help the mayor?" I say, "What do you want me to do?" They say, "We think if you and he would go have lunch." I said, "OK, I'm going to be up next week. A cold day. We can go have lunch. Where do you want to have lunch?" They said, "We thought maybe the Four Seasons."

I said, "Come on; he's running for mayor of New York. I have a better idea." They said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "We'll go have a hot dog." They said, "What?" I said, "We'll go to 56th Street off Broadway and we'll go up—I'll meet him there and we'll go have a hot dog. What could be more New York than that?" They said, "That's a great idea, we'll tell the mayor."

So they tell Mike and Mike agrees. We go up to New York. I give my speech or whatever I was doing, go up to meet him and he's all bundled up in a coat. I have no coat on. The press is there, *New York Times*, everybody is there taking pictures, getting ready. People are starting in—"Hey, mayor, how you doing?" "Hey, pal, how you doing?" We finally go up to the guy with the hot dog pushcart. He doesn't know what's go on. I say, "Hey, two hot dogs." The guy starts to turn and fix them and Mike says, "I'll have my bun toasted please." [laughter] I say, "Mike, Jesus Christ, what more can I do for you? You don't toast buns in New York." You take a dirty-water dog, you throw it on a bun, and that's it. But as it turned out, the next morning *New York Times* page one, above the fold, here we are, eating our hot dogs.

**Riley:** Was it John Kerry who wanted Swiss cheese on his Philly cheesesteak?

**Cifrino:** You don't put Swiss cheese on a Philly cheesesteak. I'm from outside of Philly; I know my Philly cheesesteaks.

**Powell:** I'm the chairman of the [Dwight] Eisenhower Fellowship Program and Peggy and I always go to the annual meeting in Philadelphia. They know me by now and they know my proclivities. So they have a beautiful lunch every time and they serve—at the Rittenhouse, you know the Rittenhouse? It's a pretty cool—

**Cifrino:** High-end.

**Powell:** A high-end hotel where they hold the meeting.

**Cifrino:** On Rittenhouse Square.

**Powell:** Rittenhouse Square. So they serve everybody in the room and this is a very upscale board that I have—Christie Todd Whitman is on it, Scowcroft is on it, John Whitehead was on it, all these foreign people and rich people, about four tables, tables of eight. They serve everybody and they bring me Philly cheesesteak. [*laughter*] Nobody else gets one, just me.

**Cifrino:** This is the guy who is out at a fancy dinner and says, “I’ll have spaghetti and meatballs with the red sauce.”

**Powell:** I do not. You know what I order, even when I’m at the Waldorf Astoria.

**Cifrino:** Bolognese.

**Powell:** Spaghetti bolognese.

**Cifrino:** One other thing and I can’t remember, we may have discussed the issue, but it wasn’t in context. What was the incident with Cheney giving a VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] speech and saying exactly the opposite of what you said in a speech the day before? I remember the headline: Cheney says this and every agency says no, that’s not what was said.

**Powell:** It’s August of 2002. I’ve had the upstairs meeting with the President about you’ve got to take it to the UN. He agrees. Cheney and Rumsfeld reluctantly go along because they see the benefit. If we don’t get the resolution, at least we tried. If we just go without a resolution, without trying, no one will be with us. So build a coalition or get the problem solved without a war. This was about the first week of August. Everybody agrees.

Dick then goes to the VFW—

**Cifrino:** Big national conference.

**Powell:** Big national conference.

**Cifrino:** Thousands of people.

**Powell:** He gives a speech on veterans and this and that. Then he mentions that we are going to the UN. But he says, “I have no optimism that any of this will work.” He essentially shoots down the President’s plan. So even the President is honked off now. So I said, “Condi, who approved the speech?” She said, “We didn’t see that; he added something.” I said, “You realize he has undercut the President.” She said, “Yes, the President is not happy.” I said, “What are you going to do about it?”

She said, “He’s giving another speech to the American Legion in three days.” I said, “And you’re going to fix the speech?” She said yes. Well, what they did was tone down the language a little bit, but it’s still there. It’s the rest of the speech that got most of the attention, so it didn’t cause me any new problems, but it was really not so much a press problem as it was internal. He was saying to the UN we don’t care what you guys think, and they didn’t. Every time we had to go get a resolution, the fight was not with the other Security Council members; it was with the Pentagon and the Vice President’s office and we had to resolve it. Even then, after the bad

speech, the President's instructions were, "Condi, fix it." It was never Dick; it was always, "Condi, fix it."

When we were trying to close Guantanamo—The President says he wants to close Guantanamo; it's his position. We would try to have a meeting about it. The Pentagon would always show up and say, "Well, we don't have all of our papers here" or this, that, "We're not sure we can handle this." No, the court, the military courts, are starting to come along. Nothing would happen. "Mr. President, we found a 93-year-old man in Guantanamo. We also found a 13-year-old boy. We have to get rid of them, got to send them home." It took us weeks to get that done.

So I report back, "Mr. President, nothing is happening. The International Committee of the Red Cross is after us; we're catching hell." He said, "Condi, go do something." So he relied on Condi a great deal to handle this as the National Security Advisor, but she was sometimes limited in being able to do this because people felt they could get around it by going to Cheney, who didn't feel it the way the President felt it, or who didn't think it was right.

**Riley:** We haven't asked you about Tony Blair, and his relationship with Blair. Was it the case that that was a complication for you in your work because so many of those communications were—

**Powell:** I was aware of all the communications because Jack Straw, Foreign Secretary, and I were extremely close.

I kept waiting for Tony to put some cautions or hurdles to jump over, to slow things down or to make sure—not so much to stop the President, but to make sure the President had considered everything, all the issues that we were talking about. Tony would know about it and Jack would talk to him, but when he came here, once they got out in the hallway of the White House to give the press conference, Tony would be totally with the President. He never played the role I thought he should have played—not as a barrier, but as another friend who was sometimes helping me. It didn't happen.

**Riley:** It's just remarkable.

**Powell:** He never said he would do it, but we thought, *Geez, aren't you concerned about this?* But Tony, he wouldn't—There are some memos that Tony wrote where he was fussing about Rumsfeld. There was one day after the President of Spain retired, stepped down from office. He came to see President Bush and we were being very truculent in our language at that point, really not listening to allies very well.

The President of Spain, José Maria Aznar, a very straight shooter—He supported us during the war and paid the price for it. So it's after the war and we are trying to fix things and bring peace to the place. What do we do? So Aznar is now retired, in a room, with myself, the President, Rumsfeld, and a couple of others. Aznar, trying to be helpful to the President, says to him, "You know, Mr. President, you would be better served in your work with the Europeans on these and other issues if you just had your people tone down a bit the kind of language they use in referring to our friends in Europe and—" dah, dah, dah.

The President said, “Oh, you mean Rummy?” Don kind of giggles. Aznar says, “That’s one good example.”

**Riley:** He didn’t take resistance—?

**Powell:** I just can’t explain it. One of the President’s favorite expressions was “He’s a leader” or “He’s not a leader.” When they got rid of the guy who was the President of Iraq and brought in the guy they made the President, [Nouri al-] Maliki, they brought in Maliki. I’m retired now, so to explain this they bring in me and all the other former Secretaries and National Security Advisors who can be there in the Roosevelt Room.

I’m sitting—I don’t know who was here, the President is over there and the Vice President and George Tenet and Rumsfeld. The President said, “It just wasn’t working.” Might have been Chalabi who was pushed out. “He’s a good man—” another one of his favorite expressions—“and he’s a leader.” How he judges a leader is almost style as opposed to substance. They’re going on and on about all he can do, it’s terrific, it’s going to be great. I couldn’t help myself, it was getting to my turn to say something. I said, “Any of you know him? Anybody in this room met him?” No. “But he’s a leader.”

I said, “Mr. President, I just want to make sure you know where he spent the last 25 years. He was living in Damascus and Teheran.”

Bremer is very articulate, he’s trim, he’s fit, and he talks extremely well. He can persuade you and convince you of something and he’s strong willed. So I think—The President had never met him before. He’s having his first meeting with him. Before the meeting is concluded, they go off for a private session and Jerry puts down his requirements. There can only be one of me there, so Zal Khalilzad—who is the only guy who knows anything about anything—he can’t be there anymore.

They have this meeting and the President gives him his guidance, “You’re in charge; take charge.” Jay Garner was an air defense officer; he wasn’t infantry or anything. He didn’t look the part, if you ever saw Jay. He was kind of a—a little jacket, no tie. He was holding loyalty meetings all over the place, which he thought was a way to build the consensus for a government. But that’s not what was working in the mind of the President.

Late that afternoon I get a call from Don. “Hey, Colin, do you know Jerry Bremer?” I said, “Yes, sure. I know Jerry. He used to be the counterterrorism guy at the State Department years ago, but he retired early; he got some benefit to retire early. I guess he’s off doing something.”

He said, “Well, the President is very impressed with him and we’re going to put him in to replace Garner or to be the new guy—not replace. Garner is going to be there for a few weeks with him.” I said, “What happened? What’s wrong?” “Well, the President didn’t think Garner was the right guy; he was not getting it done.”

OK. I know Jerry. He’s a good man; I can’t say anything against him. Then later in the day, I heard that Zal was not going to be there and I called Condi. I said, “Condi, Zal is the guy who has been working with these people for weeks. He knows them. He speaks the language. He knows how to drink tea with these people.” She said, “Yes, I know.” I said, “He’s your man, he

was your guy there.” “Well, Jerry—” and she calmly said, “Jerry said he had to be the only emissary there.” That kind of said to me hmmm. Jerry came to see me. We had a good conversation. He’s very competent, very smart, but he had no experience or background in the country. But he did put together a constitution and a government of sorts. So he did that. He was there for only a year and then he left. Then they were kind of on their own with a lot of American folks hanging around. It shows you the President’s tendency to do things instinctively.

**Riley:** Was the same true in Russia?

**Powell:** Well, you know the famous first-day meeting.

**Riley:** I do; that’s why I asked the question. Were you surprised at that?

**Powell:** Of course I was surprised. He met Putin for the first time and he said—The language has been screwed up a bit. He didn’t really say, “I can see your soul,” but it was like that. It was almost—I’ve seen this man—

He had that kind of reaction with Putin. Putin is like a Bremer and like a Maliki: firm, tough, walks with a swagger and has that kind of personality and style that the President is attracted to. So after their first meeting—He had to say something positive at the first meeting. We’re in Slovenia, was it? I think it was Slovenia, and so Condi and I are sitting in the front bleacher seats and he makes a statement: I’ve had a great meeting with the gentleman, Mr. Putin, and we got along well. You know, I was able to look into this man—and I forgot how, you could look up the language. Essentially it came out to the press as, “I saw his soul.”

I went, *Oh, God*. I’ve said ever since—I know him and I saw his eyes, he’s KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti] through and through. There is a reason he speaks fluent German. He was a KGB resident in East Germany. He’s not any democrat waiting to break out. But it was so very typical of the President’s way of judging people.

I’ll give you an even better one than that. What’s the guy who was sent over to be the police guy—the guy who was the former cop in New York? Peggy? Bloomberg’s buddy.

**Riley:** We know who you’re talking about. Bernard Kerik.

**Powell:** Anyway, we just hear one day that Kerik has gone over to run the police business and to create a new police force. So OK, he’s working for Bremer I guess, or somebody; I don’t know who he is working for. Bremer is probably gone by then; I don’t remember. So we start to research this guy. I’m not quite sure what it is he’s doing. He is over there acting like a New York cop. So we start to become disturbed by it.

When I heard that he was going over, I said to the President, “Mr. President, are you sure this is the right guy?” He said, “Yes, good man, leader.” After he had been there for a while—He didn’t stay long—he came out. There was really nothing to show for his presence. The next thing I hear is that the President is going to nominate—Condi tells me the President is going to nominate Bernie Kerik as the new Secretary of Homeland Security. I said, “Condi, have you vetted him?” She said, “Oh, yes.” I said, “Condi, he was a disaster over there. He played cop. He went on

raids. He wasn't running anything; he was being a cop, and a bad cop. You can't make him Secretary."

She said, "Well, we've looked into this." I said, "Condi, I'm begging you, go do some more vetting, both in his New York experience and what he did over there." She came back the next day and said, "We've vetted him. He's a good man, good shape, a leader." It lasted about three days before the *New York Post* and the *Daily News* got on to it.

**Silverstone:** Right.

**Powell:** The guy was on his way to jail and that's where he ended up. He immediately had to get out of the way. When Condi told me he had been fully vetted for Homeland Security, I said to the President the next day, "Sir, you'd better really watch out with this guy." He said OK. Then two days later he was gone. Not a word was ever said in my presence again about him. But there was too much stuff like that. His tendency was, "Thanks, Brownie [Michael D. Brown]; you're doing a great job." I think he knew Brownie, but he didn't really understand what was the problem in New Orleans. Then he had to live with, "You're doing a great job, Brownie." It is impulsive: he's a great leader, something tells me he's right. Sometimes true, sometimes not.

You guys are over your time now.

**Riley:** I know—anything, Barbara?

**Perry:** No, except for a photo—may we?

**Riley:** You've been very generous with your time and it has been very informative.

*[Taking pictures, talk about transcript release policies]*

**Powell:** We didn't get into Haiti, did we?

**Riley:** No, we didn't, do you want to say something?

**Powell:** Do you have questions? I got the guy in and I had to take him out. I got him in in '94 and took him out in 2003.