

**Excerpt from the LA Times interview with US Secretary of State Colin Powell
June 24, 2004**

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/33862.htm>

MR. RICHTER: At the UN, the U.S. is trying to get another waiver regarding our troops in the ICC. Apparently, we're struggling, from what I was hearing last week. Are we going to be able to pull that off? And isn't it a little awkward for us, at a moment when we're trying to work jointly with countries in Iraq, to have this happening to us?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes, I would just as soon not have to deal with this issue this week. I'll be doing vote counts overnight. We are trying to show some flexibility in the language to see how that affects the vote count. And typically I have to wait 24 hours for people to call home for instructions and get instructions back, but by Thursday we will make a decision as to whether we will go for a vote or not.

MR. RICHTER: I see. So the language might be different than in previous years?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah. We're looking at modifications or some other variations of the language. I'm being clever here because I don't want to tell you what they are. (Laughter.)

MR. RICHTER: Good. At least you're candid. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, it's what you would expect us to do. We're looking -- we're looking to see if we can achieve what we want, which is another rollover, but perhaps make the language of the rollover or the terms of the rollover more acceptable to more members of the Council because a number of nations already said that they'd have to abstain on a rollover. And so I'm doing what I spend a lot of my time doing, and that's counting votes. Sometimes I think I'm a whip. (Laughter.)

MR. RICHTER: At the wrong end of the city here.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah.

MR. RICHTER: But, I mean, would this provide less coverage for our troops then?

SECRETARY POWELL: No. If any -- we're not looking at any modification that would change the coverage that our troops currently enjoy with this resolution. Remember our troops are not excused from anything; they're still subject to the ICC.
(Phone rings.)

SECRETARY POWELL: I'll call right back.
It's just put in abeyance for a year. That's the nature of the resolution. And so we would want that abeyance provision continued, so we wouldn't want to put our troops in any risk that they are not now in. But there are a number of abstentions already signaled to us. That means we have to take a look and see if we can do anything with the language without changing the purpose of the language to attract more votes. Abu Ghraib has, you know, affected this, the way people look at the ICC.

MR. RICHTER: You're still confident, though, that it can be done, or are there real questions?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think what I said was I'll know by Thursday.

MR. RICHTER: Yeah, okay. Good.