

Powell seems to rule out finding WMD

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Bush administration is apparently ready to abandon a major reason it gave the world for going to war with Iraq: Saddam Hussein's purported storehouses of chemical and biological weapons the administration said he was prepared to use against the United States.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, who made the claim in a dramatic prewar presentation to a skeptical United Nations in 2003, virtually withdrew it Monday during testimony before the Senate Government Affairs Committee.

"There was every reason to believe there were stockpiles," Powell said. "There was a question about the size of stockpiles, but we all believed there were stockpiles." However, Powell said in response to questions from Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, "it turned out that we have not found any stockpiles."

Moreover, Powell said, "I think it is unlikely that we



Iraqi Shi'ite Muslim men beat a bust of ousted president Saddam Hussein following Friday noon prayers in Sadr City, last December. The Iraq Survey Group is to confirm during the next fortnight that Saddam Hussein's regime had no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction when it was invaded last year, a United Kingdom daily said.

will find any stockpiles."

The job now, he said, was "to go back and find out why we had a different judgment."

Since the war, Powell said he had found that "some of the sourcing that we used to give me the basis upon which to bring forward that judgment to the United Nations was flawed."

Powell did not elaborate on what he may have thought went wrong. Before speaking to the United Nations, where sentiment was strongly against war and for continuing inspection searches, Powell spent four days in consultation with then-CIA Director George Tenet and other CIA officials.

Powell told the committee Monday that he believed a strong National Intelligence

Director would improve the quality of intelligence available to U.S. decision-makers.

"We need a stronger, empowered quarterback," Powell said.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge joined Powell in endorsing the idea of a new director with budget authority over the nation's non-military intelligence agencies.

"In this town, it's the ultimate command and control," said Ridge, who was denied budget authority over other security agencies when Congress created his department after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Powell also endorsed President Bush's suggestion that he, Ridge and other top officials sit on a Cabinet-level joint intelligence council to advise the intelligence director.

He said he envisioned its work as similar to the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, where heads of the military branches sit together to decide the armed forces' needs as a whole.

Group's ad assault courts Black voters

By LIZ SIDOTI
Associated Press

A group of Democratic insiders that has spent some \$40 million on advertising against President Bush is rolling out new campaign commercials telling urban Blacks "don't keep getting played" and accusing Bush of turning his back on them.

"Bush has a plan for America. But you're not part of it," says one television ad released Monday. Another claims: "Bush said prosperity was right around the corner, but he wasn't talking about the corners in your neighborhood."

The Media Fund plans to spend a relatively large amount for minority media — about \$5 million between now and Nov. 2 — on television, radio and print ads — mostly in the presidential battleground states of Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Steve Schmidt, a Bush campaign spokesman, called the ads "divisive and baseless," and said they are "produced from a position of weakness."

Democrats have claimed that Republicans are working to suppress the Black vote to help Bush win, particularly through radio and print ads by a Washington-based group called People of Color United. Its ads, funded largely by Republicans, criticized Democrat John Kerry of being a "wishy-washy, rich, White politician" and his African-born wife Teresa Heinz Kerry as "elitist, rich and White."

Blacks historically have been loyal Democratic voters, and Kerry needs to ensure they turn out on Election Day. (See Campaign, Page 12)

R. Kelly performance raises some eyebrows

NEW YORK (AP) - R. Kelly headlined a Congressional Black Caucus benefit concert Friday night, but not all the lawmakers were "happy people."

Some CBC members are concerned about Kelly being connected to the conference while he is facing 14 counts of child pornography in Chicago. The 37-year-old R&B superstar was charged after a tape surfaced allegedly showing him having sex with a 13-year-old girl. He has pleaded innocent.

"I would not have invited R. Kelly," Congressman William Jefferson, D-La., the CBC Foundation Chairman, told The Associated Press.

The concert at the Washington Convention Center was one of the premier events of the CBC's Annual Legislative Conference. Sponsored by the spouses of the CBC, its purpose was to raise money for scholarships for needy young people.

"Legislators should know more than most that you're innocent until proven guilty," said Allan Mayer, a spokesman for Kelly. He would not comment about concerns that Kelly could detract attention from the weekend's causes.

CBC Spouses director Jacquelin Dennis said in a statement released Thursday: "We are confident that (Kelly's) performance will help us to achieve our goal to educate the next generation of leaders."

Kelly has been free on bond since being charged June 5, 2002. No trial date has been set for the Illinois indictment, which could send him to prison for 15 years.

The accusations haven't hurt his career — his latest album sold 1.7 million copies, and his new CD, "Happy People/U Saved Me," debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard charts.

In March, Florida prosecutors dropped child pornography charges against Kelly after a judge ruled that photos allegedly showing him having sex with an underage girl were illegally seized.

The 34th CBC conference, which began last Wednesday, culminated Saturday in an awards dinner honoring individuals who have made special contributions to African-Americans.

Study: Racial profiling burgeoning problem

WASHINGTON (AP) - Authorities' targeting of people because of their racial background or religious affiliation is a deep-rooted problem in the United States, with nearly 32 million people reporting they've been racially profiled, a human rights group said Monday.

The report by Amnesty International USA also said at least 87 million people — one in three — in the United States are at high risk of being victimized because they belong to a racial, ethnic or religious group whose members are commonly targeted by police for unlawful stops and searches.

Racial profiling is a growing problem as the government has expanded its war on terror, the report said. Police, immigration and airport security procedures are the areas where the problem has gotten worse since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, it said.

Citizens and visitors of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent, and others who appear to be from these areas or members of the Muslim and Sikh faiths, have become more frequent subjects of racial profiling over the last three years, the study said.

Such racial profiling is a distraction to law enforce-

ment and therefore, undermines national security efforts, the report said. As police primarily focus on Arab, Muslim and South Asian males, it said, they are more likely to overlook terrorists who are White.

For example, recent cases of American Taliban John Walker Lindh and British shoe bomber Richard Reid show that al-Qaida has an ability to recruit a diverse range of sympathizers. These two would not necessarily have been identified by policies that focus on Arab, Muslim and South Asian males, the report said.

Aside from the ill-effects on victims — depression and humiliation — racial profiling reinforces residential segregation, creates fear and mistrust and engenders reluctance in reporting crimes and cooperating with police officers, Amnesty International USA said.

"In these times of domestic insecurity, our nation simply cannot afford to tolerate practices and policies that build walls between individuals or communities and those who are charged with the duty of protecting all of us," it said.

State laws continue to be insufficient in addressing the

problem, according to the report.

Twenty-seven states do not ban racial profiling, the report said. Also, 46 states don't ban religious profiling, 35 continue to allow pedestrian "stop and frisk" searches and only six of the 15 that ban these searches use a definition of racial profiling that can actually be enforced, the report said.

No jurisdiction in the United States has addressed the problem in a way that is effective and comprehensive, the report said. As of August, bills dealing with racial profiling had been introduced in 41 states and passed in 29 — with only 23 of these states actually banning the practice

outright, the report said.

The group endorsed bills introduced in the House by Reps. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., and Christopher Shays, R-Conn., and in the Senate by Democrat Russell Feingold of Wisconsin that would ban racial profiling at all levels of government.

Amnesty International USA came up with its estimate of nearly 32 million profiling victims by analyzing a collection of recent polls, census figures and studies, including a 2002 examination by George Washington University's sociology department. The group heard from scores of victims during a year of hearings around the country.

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