Raging Bull

May 1, 2002 By Staff

The politics of HIV prevention have provoked an Abstinence Avengers vs. Condom Crusaders slugfest inside the Bush White House. In Round 1, Bush's top AIDS advisor dissed condoms as unsafe (see "Scumbag Humbug," POZ, April 2002). Round 2 witnessed Colin Powell counterpunch in an MTV interview seen by Gen-Y millions. A right-wing rumble resulted:

"Condoms are a way to prevent infection, and therefore...I encourage their use among people who are sexually active.... It is important that the whole international community come together, speak candidly about it, forget about conservative ideas with respect to what you should tell young people about it."

-- Colin Powell, secretary of state, Feb. 14

"The secretary of state is certainly skilled in areas of diplomacy, but regarding public health issues, he should follow the lead of the Bush administration."

-- Gary Bauer, president, American Values, Feb. 15

"The president and the secretary are shoulder to shoulder on abstinence education, as well as health education and sex education as a way to...prevent sexually transmitted diseases."

-- Ari Fleischer, White House spokesperson, Feb. 15

"I agree with [Powell]."

-- Sen. John McCain, Feb. 17

"I don't take one step back from the remarks I made... To have said anything else would have been irresponsible."

-- Colin Powell, Feb. 17

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