



Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Transatlantic Community

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SECRETARY BURNS: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for waiting for me. I apologize I was late, but I'm happy to be here. Our plane arrived two hours late this morning and I was over meeting Commissioner Olli Rehn over at EU Headquarters. We had a good meeting. I'm sorry to be late, but I'm happy to be here. And thank you for the invitation to speak here at CEPS. I, of course, came here many times when I lived in Brussels as NATO Ambassador. It's a well-known institution. We thank you for the effort that you've made to try to be a bridge across the Atlantic Ocean between Europe and the United States.

The first thing I should say is that I'm looking forward to the question and answer session. I always find that that's by far the most interesting part of these get-togethers. But I wanted to say first to all the Europeans in the audience, many of you are celebrating the 50 years of the European Union of the Treaty of Rome. This is a great occasion for Europe. It's also a great occasion for the rest of the world, particularly those of us who are admirers of Europe. There's no question in my mind that when the history of the late 20th and early 21st Centuries are written, the creation and the flourishing of a European Union is going to be one of the great success stories. And there's no question, if you look at that from an economic or political or military perspective that the European Union has been a fundamentally successful organization in transforming Europe very much for the better.

I saw the impact of the EU as a young student here. I lived in France and in Luxembourg in the 1970s during Lycee and university time. From the beginnings, the European Union was playing a role that was integrative, that was trying to at that point really unite the Western part of Europe. Then, of course, in the last 10 to 15 years we've seen the EU be the principal agent that has binded Europe East and Europe West after the end of the Cold War, after the destruction of communism in the East into one integrated whole. That is a singular accomplishment.

We'd like to think in my country that we have been supportive of this process for 60 years, if you think back to the Marshall Plan in 1947. We're celebrating that anniversary this year, as well as the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and 1948, and from the construction of NATO in 1949. And the fact that NATO and the EU were able to be the twin pillars of an independent, secure, peaceful and now united Europe at least in the last 15 years. This is a singular success story.

And just, I think, from the perspective of a diplomat who admires Europe and admires what the European Union has been able to do, to see that you've built one of the most successful economies in the world, certainly the single greatest selection of economies built on common principles that the world has ever known, that is a decisive achievement of the European Union.

You have achieved standards of environmental consciousness and protection, of social justice, of worker rights, of workplace safety that are really unique in the world. You lead the world in many of these very important social and political and economic categories. So I speak as an admirer of the European Union and as a country that is very much allied with the European Union in the world. I wanted to say that at the beginning.

I also wanted to say that I think this is a very good and transformative time in the relationship between the United States and Europe itself. I lived through the great trans-Atlantic wars of 2002 and 2003, and I remember very well around the table at NATO coming over to the European Union when we had our monthly meetings with the EU and NATO Ambassadors, how difficult that time was. When we disagreed over, many of us, not all of us, over the Iraq war, over the nature of power, over the proper use of the United Nations, there were so many issues that we debated at that time. A lot of people began to question whether or not the 60 year alliance between Europe and the United States was beginning to fray and whether it would survive at all that crisis. I think I can say quite safely and with a great deal of certainty here in March of 2007, we survived it. We've overcome it. We've rebuilt the foundations of alliance, of trust, and of understanding that are at the heart of an alliance. I think the US-European relationship is in very good shape as we look at it now two to three and four years after those very difficult arguments.

Think of it this way. We are now partners on the leading issues of the day. France and the United States have led the effort to try to support Prime Minister Siniora from the attempt by Iran and Hezbollah to bring down a democratically elected government in Lebanon.

On Iran, we're working – Britain, France, Germany, Russia, the United States – all together, and you see how successfully. Just Saturday we passed the second Chapter 7 UN Security Council Resolution that will provide a stronger set of sanctions to limit the Iranians and encourage them to negotiate with us.

On Afghanistan, it's a shared enterprise. All of our troops are there together. The EU and NATO are working there together.

In Darfur, in Somalia, we're beginning to understand that security crises in Africa have security implications for Europeans as well as Americans.

So I do think we've overcome the differences of a couple of years ago. I do think we're working together very well on the leading issues of the day.

One of the ironies of this is that perhaps public opinion has not changed as much as the private efforts between and among governments and we still need to pay attention to that imperative.

I also think that when we look at US-European relations we have to understand the profound shift that's occurred, and it really is a great historical shift in the way that we work with each other.

In terms of American foreign policy towards Europe, if you look back over the last 100 years, our foreign policy was always about Europe. From April 1917 when Woodrow Wilson, our President, committed one million American troops to the Western front to support Belgium and France and Britain, all the way through to our shared effort to defeat Nazism in the 2nd World War, and our shared effort to prevent a nuclear and continental war during the Cold War. Our shared effort to create NATO and the EU to protect democracy and free market economics for five decades, and all the way through to the Kosovo War of eight years ago, and it's been exactly eight years since that war started when NATO intervened decisively to end the ethnic cleansing of a million Moslems by Slobodan Milosevic.

Our foreign policy, America's towards Europe, has been about the divisions in Europe and about the wars in Europe and the balance of power rivalry in Europe, and the instability in Europe that did exist at that time. Now Europe is happily, probably the only place on earth that is truly united, peaceful, democratic and stable, the only collection of countries you can find over a wide expanse. There's no longer a necessity for American foreign policy or US-European relations to be about Europe. That's a success. It's a success of about a century's worth of effort and at least from an American perspective, and I'm sure I'll hear yours. From an American perspective it's one of the great foreign policy accomplishments of the United States in our 230-odd years as a nation state, that we have been able to combine with Europe to support democracy and free market economics and the integration that the EU and NATO represent on this continent .

So US-European relations now are all about not Europe but the rest of the world. When Javier Solana and Foreign Minister Steinmeier and Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner spent two days with us in Washington last week with Condi Rice, we talked about everything but problems in Europe with the exception of the Balkans. The leading issues were Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, relations with China, and our wish to try to bring further investment to Central and South America. And for conflict resolution in Africa, and for global HIV/AIDS work and poverty alleviation work in Africa. That was the agenda that we laid out last week.

With the exception of the Balkans, happily so, we no longer have to have a US-European relationship that is about the conflicts and divisions in Europe. They largely have disappeared because of the great success of what you Europeans have done to build the EU and to build NATO and to build a continent of peace. That is a great, great historical accomplishment.

In essence, we've been able to create--especially since 1989, a single--democratic Atlantic community that unites North America, Canada, the United States, and Western Europe and Central Europe and Eastern Europe in a common effort to produce peace and produce stability in the world.

I would say if you agree with me that that's a historical fact and that's the most important transformation in a century in our relationship, then I hope you'd also agree that we have continued responsibilities in the world. Inside Europe, our first responsibility is to be successful in the Balkans in completing the revolution, the positive revolution that has taken place since the mid 1990s there. Our second, and I'm very pleased that Ambassador Chizhov is here, is for us to have a successful relationship with Russia. Let me just say a word about both of them.

This is an important day for the peoples of Kosovo and of Serbia and the Balkans. It was eight years ago that we went in to end that ethnic cleansing. It was eight years ago this coming June when UN Security Council Resolution 1244 was passed which effectively put Kosovo into the hands not of Serbia but of the United Nations. It's been eight years that the European Union and NATO have been the backbone of the international effort to try to stabilize Kosovo -- economic assistance, humanitarian assistance, rebuilding of the infrastructure of Kosovo, and of course the efforts of the 16,000 NATO soldiers--and 2,000 from my own country of those 16,000--to maintain stability and maintain peace.

But Resolution 1244 when it was passed in June of 1999 looked ahead to the day when Kosovo status should be finally resolved, and this morning in New York President Martti Ahtissari, the United Nations negotiator, will submit formally a plan to Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that will answer the question that we did not answer for those eight years. It will call for the creation of an independent state in Kosovo, of a state that will have a degree of supervised independence. He will call for the creation of safeguards to protect the Serb minority. Its churches, its monasteries, its patrimonial sites, and the people, the Kosovar Serbs, who have a right to live in Kosovo and a right to think that they have a future in Kosovo. He will call for the United Nations Security Council, leading members like Russia, the United States, France, Britain, to look now at this question and to decide what action the Security Council should take.

The United States fully supports the proposal put forward by President Ahtissari. We support all of the recommendations that he has made, and we will support a process that will lead to supervised independence for Kosovo. We hope that that process can be decided at the United Nations by the Security Council certainly in the month of April, or no later than the month of May.

We know this is a complex undertaking. We know that emotions are high on both sides. But it is time to give the people who live in Kosovo, and the 92-93 percent of them who are Kosovar Albanian, a sense that they have a right now to control their own destiny after eight years of not knowing what that destiny should be. We will be reaching out to the Serb government. I hope to call President Tadic later today to let him know what the position of the United States is and to say that we are a friend of Serbia, we wish to work with Serbia, and we wish to see Serbia have a future ultimately as a democratic state with the EU and with NATO. And we'll obviously be working with the Russian government and my colleague, Deputy Foreign Minister Titov. I hope he and I will be meeting in just a couple of days' time to talk about what Russia and the United States can do to cooperate together to produce a successful outcome.

So this is an important time for Kosovo and an important time for the joint US-European effort which has been since--the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the four wars that broke out in the '90s, it's time to bring a century of peace and security to the Balkans themselves, to see Kosovo independent, to see Serbia democratic and strong, and to see Bosnia perceived through a process of constitutional reform to modernize its state structures so that it too can seek a future with the European Union and with NATO.

If we, Russia, and the countries of Europe and the United States and Canada can complete this process of solidifying the unity and peace in the Balkans, that will truly finish the process in the words of President George H. W. Bush in 1990 of creating a Europe that's whole, free, and at peace for the first time in centuries. That will be a fundamental achievement of the European peoples if we can get there in the next few years.

I would say that's the first preoccupation of Europe and the United States in 2007.

The second is to effect a good relationship with the Russian Federation. Here from an American perspective I think we need to have a balanced view. There's such a great debate about this in Russia as well as in the United States and Europe. We certainly need to achieve a balance of interest with the Russian Federation. I'm speaking now on behalf of my own government.

On the two leading international issues of the day from an American perspective--counter-terrorism--our collective international ability to prevent terrorist attacks against our democratic societies--and counter-proliferation--our international effort to reduce the number of nuclear powers to prevent new nuclear powers from arriving--Russia and the United States are partners. Russia is one of our leading partners in the fight against international terrorism. Both of us are victims of terrorism, unfortunately. The first world leader to call President Bush on 9/11 was President Putin, and we haven't forgotten that.

On the issue of nuclear proliferation, Russia and the United States are in the middle of the two great and I think increasingly successful efforts being made with six party talks concerning North Korea and the P5 talks to convince the North Koreans to dismantle their nuclear program completely and live by the September 2005 agreement.

And in the case of Iran, to follow up these two Chapter 7 resolutions and to try to convince the Iranians that we do want the Iranian people to have civil nuclear power. None of us want them to become a nuclear weapon state. We've been very encouraged by the cooperation that we have had, we in Washington with the Russian government, on both of these issues, particularly in the last few weeks as we made the breakthrough on North Korea in February and March, as we had such a successful outcome. Fifteen to zero in the Security Council just two days ago.

So on both of those global issues I think US-Russian relations are in very good shape.

But there's no question and Ambassador Chizhov will have his chance to defend himself and his government I'm sure if he chooses to do that--there's no question that there are problems in at least America's relations with Russia that need to be worked out. But we Americans have not been shy of speaking out, and I know the Russians have been critical of the United States for a variety of things. What we see as diminished commitment to democracy in some aspects of Russia's political life, diminished press freedom certainly.

We are concerned that sometimes Russia needs to work more amicably to resolve questions near Russia's borders. I'm thinking now of Georgia and Moldova, and the fact that the Istanbul commitments made so many years ago have not been met in our view by the Russian Federation.

So there are problems that need to be worked out in our relations, but we have an open relationship with Russia. We talk frequently at the leadership level. Our foreign and defense ministers talk. I think we'll be able to work through these problems, and we ought to because Russia is such a fundamentally important country for the balance of power here in Europe, for the success of what we want to do internationally. So we choose engagement for Russia, and we choose to try to work through problems when those problems arise.

I think in those two areas, the Balkans and Russia, the United States and Europe need to achieve more positive and greater results in 2007. But we also have a vocation in the rest of the world, and I want to conclude here my remarks by just trying to identify what that vocation is.

If it's true that this great transformation in our relationship between Europe and America is and it's no longer about Europe, it's certainly now about the rest of the world. Our whole agenda between the EU and the United States, and at NATO, in economics, in politics, and in military affairs is in what Europe and America can do to combine our force, our power, and our peoples to try to make the world more peaceful and more stable and that has to start in the Middle East with these four interlocking crises.

The first is the problem of Iraq--continued instability, violence, terrorism, against the democratically elected government, by Sunni and Shia militant groups. And we certainly want to see a continued application of European political interest, financial involvement, and military involvement on the part of those countries that are with the coalition to help stabilize Iraq in the period ahead.

The second is the problem of Lebanon. It is very important to Europe, because France has played such an important and positive role, where you have a democratically elected government that speaks for all the various ethnic and religious groups in the country, yet now Hezbollah wants to bring it down by extraconstitutional means, supported with fear by Syria and by Iran. To see President Chirac lead the conference that he did in January, and to see Europe and America work well to defend that government, is a source of some comfort to us.

The third is a problem that Secretary Condi Rice has been working on in upper Egypt and now in Israel over the last two days: our wish to see an independent Palestinian state created in the Middle East, living side by side with Israel in respect and in security and in mutual recognition. We do support the creation of such a state, and we wish it to occur. We also hope the Palestinians now will speak with one voice in recognizing and supporting the state of Israel, in denouncing terrorism, and accepting the body of work that all of us know to be the Middle East peace process over the last 30 to 40 years. Hamas has rejected all three of those conditions, which is why our country and most European countries don't deal with Hamas. But we do hope there can be unity among the Palestinians so that that imperative of building a Palestinian state can be realized.

Finally, the fourth interlocking problem in the Middle East is the question of Iran: Iran's attempts to destabilize Lebanon; to arm Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the PFLP-General Command, as the leading central banker of Middle East terrorism; and Iran's attempt to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, which has been resoundingly spoken against by the UN Security Council and now by the leading members of the non-aligned movement -- South Africa, Indonesia, Egypt, India, and Brazil. They've all come out against Iran's nuclear weapons program. Iran is isolated and on the defensive. We hope that Javier Solana can have some luck now in representing us to approach the Iranian government, and to say that the offer we made to negotiate with them is still on the table, that we'd like to resolve this peacefully and diplomatically.

Those four interlocking issues in the Middle East are really the heart of America's and Europe's foreign policy preoccupation in 2007, but Afghanistan is important as well. We have a shared vocation there. We're working with a sound, democratically elected government. We need to help rebuild the country economically, deal with its narcotics problem, and defeat the attempt by Taliban and al Qaeda to destabilize Afghanistan. That's an important American and European venture.

In Africa, we want the UN Security Council to be able to authorize a force, an international peacekeeping force, to go into Darfur and protect the innocent people of Darfur from the genocide that is occurring against them.

We want the UN Security Council to authorize a force to go into Somalia, into that very difficult and complex country, to try to bring a measure of stability and peace there.

We want to see a continued United Nations effort to help the Congo and Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia and Sierra Leone deal with the problems of internal conflict. Africa is a place where I think Europe and the United States have been so much more active in the last few years than we ever have been before together, and it's a place where we tend to agree on what needs to be done.

Finally, Europe and the United States need to meet the great transformational challenges that are at the heart of the future globalized international agenda-- whether it's climate change or trafficking of women and children, or the fight against drug cartels and crime cartels, or terrorist groups and their juxtaposition with chemical, biological, and nuclear technology -- in those great transformational challenges that we're facing in a globalized world. No country can be isolationist, no country can be unilateralist, and we need to rebuild our great international institutions to overcome those challenges. That's why it's important that the United States and the European Union have a solid relationship. It's why it's important that we're trying to reform and modernize NATO as we've been doing very successfully. It's why we need a good relationship with the Russian Federation and with countries throughout the world, because these global problems that I've mentioned can't be met by any one of us alone. They by their very nature can only be overcome by international action.

That brings us back to the imperative of diplomacy. There are times when military force must be used, but most of the time diplomacy, coalitions, and international institutions are the way that problems are resolved. You can see that -- on Lebanon, on North Korea, on Iran, and on the Israeli-Palestinian dispute -- diplomacy has come to the center, and my country is the center with many other countries represented in this room in the fight to achieve a peaceful resolution of disputes. That is now the overriding preoccupation in our capital, Washington, D.C., as I think it is in all the European capitals, and that does unite Europe and the United States with a common agenda and a common purpose for the future.

So I am optimistic about the future of our relations with Europe. This international agenda is going to bind us together because all of our interests, as well as our values, are caught up in this great effort to see if we can be successful in producing peace and in producing stability in the future in all the areas that I've talked about.

I'm happy to be here. I'm happy to offer those words to you to explain the foreign policy of my country and government. And I look forward to a good conversation with all of you about these issues. Thank you very much.

[Applause].

QUESTION: A question for Ambassador Burns. [Inaudible] Kosovo?

SECRETARY BURNS: I'll be having meetings with most of the European countries here in two days. We have a big NATO meeting tomorrow on Kosovo, so the 26 of us will get together. We had hoped to have a Contact Group meeting with the Russian Federation, but it didn't work out for the schedule of our Russian counterparts, so we've all agreed to see him and I'll be seeing him I hope in New York later this week. But at least I can speak for the countries of the EU and the United States, and I think some of our EU partners. I think we've worked out a common strategy. You'll be seeing an official and formal statement by the State Department in a couple of hours that will repeat what I just said. I saw a statement last Thursday from the French government, and we expect statements from some of the other western European countries today.

I think all of us believe that after eight years it's time. It's time to make a decision, that Kosovo is ready for it. This will be a proposal that Ahtisaari is making for supervised independence. That will mean that we'll need to look to the European Union to play in many ways the role that the United Nations has played over the last eight years, and the civil façade on the domestic side in Kosovo. We'll need to look to NATO to continue to deploy the 16,000 NATO troops that have been there for eight years to provide for security for the borders, as well as the streets of the country. But it's high time this happened. Ninety-two or three percent of the people now are Kosovar Albanians.

The key factor of the Ahtisaari plan is to make sure that the Kosovar Albanian leadership is not just prepared for independence, but is prepared to protect the rights of the Kosovar Serb minority that live not just in the northern part of Kosovo, not just in Mitrovica. They really live all over the country in small pockets.

I visited twice Serb families in Oblic, a very important town for Serb history, and they want to stay there, the people that I met. So assurances that they'll be protected that they have a right to live there, that they have a right to plan for a future there, that their churches and monasteries and patrimonial sites will be protected --that's an important issue that requires further discussion.

I think what you'll see is some weeks of discussion. We're not going to run towards a UN Security Council resolution because obviously the 15 of us will need to talk. The most important partner, obviously, will be Russia, because Russia, of course, has for many many decades played a role in this region, and we hope that by our conversations with Russia and others we'll be able to effect a good Security Council resolution that will be consistent with the Ahtisaari plan. We don't see a need for new negotiations, we don't see a need for a new negotiator, we think Ahtisaari has done a first rate job. We support him. We support his recommendations. We support independence, supervised independence for Kosovo.

QUESTION: Nicholas Burns, those of us who know you at least a bit are not surprised at the impeccably positive and agreeable speech that you've made to us from a European standpoint. I'd like to ask you a slightly harsh question about changes, possible changes, ongoing or future, in the paradigms of US foreign policy.

What I have in mind are some references. At the beginning of the Bush administration we remember two very very harsh lines coming from some neocon spokesman, "We don't need allies." And even Condi Rice was heard to say in the early days of the administration, "Kyoto is dead." So those two messages, of course, were extremely upsetting in Europe.

My question then is, six or seven years now on in the Bush administration, what has changed? Were those blips? Has there been an important change? And do you anticipate continuing change to the extent that you can see a little bit further ahead in the US?

As you're aware, many very distinguished international relations theorists and analysts in the US say basically the language may change a bit but the fundamentals remain obstinately permanent and consistent through the march of US foreign policy history.

SECRETARY BURNS: Thank you very much. I think we've lived through an extraordinary six or seven years. There have been two wars. A war in Afghanistan, a war in Iraq. Major international peacekeeping efforts in both. We've seen, unfortunately, the expansion of international terrorism and all of our countries have been victimized by that, and democratic peoples everywhere have been victimized by it.

The real problems of these transnational challenges, climate change you mentioned, and trafficking in women and children, and drugs and crime, have affected all of us in a negative way.

So I think there's a bipartisan consensus in my country. I'm a career diplomat. I'm not a Republican, I'm not a Democrat, I'm not a political person. So I just try to say this objectively. In my country there is a consensus that America cannot live in the world alone, that America should not try to face the world alone, that we need allies, we need friends. We need to tend to those alliances and nurture them and rebuild them when they are frayed and when we have great disagreements, as we clearly did here in Brussels back a couple of years ago. I think, to be fair to my country and to President Bush and to Secretary Rice and our government, we've made an enormous effort to rebuild that relationship.

The President came out here just after his inauguration in 2005. His very first trip was to Brussels, and he had that historic meeting with President Chirac and Chancellor Schroeder and the NATO leadership and the EU leadership, and I think since then it's been abundantly clear to our European partners that America does want the closest possible relationship with the European Union. Look at the shared enterprises we're involved in. We work all over the world with you in shared purposes.

Look at the commitment we've made to build a good relationship with Russia. It's been difficult. We don't always agree. President Putin gave a very tough speech. We disagreed with it very strongly at the Wehrkunde Conference in Munich. So the Russians have made these concerns known on their side and we've done it back, saying we're concerned about what we see happening politically with we think infringements on democracy. We're concerned about sometimes the way Russia treats the Baltic countries and Georgia and Moldova. But it doesn't mean you quit on a relationship and stop talking to each other because you have problems. You try to work them out as we're trying to do with Russia. But I think this is now a good period of US-European cooperation. I don't think America is sending signals that we want to go it alone. I think there is a great distance between some of those earlier statements and the reality today, in fact, of the commitment that we've made to diplomacy -- Iran, North Korea, Israel-Palestine, Sudan, Somalia. These are the leading international issues of the day and we're putting forward diplomatic solutions on all of them.

We sat down and talked to Iran and Syria in Baghdad on March 10th. We look forward to further meetings with Iran and Syria on the future of Iraq. We're trying to sit down with the Iranians on the nuclear issue. The Russians, the Americans, the Chinese, the Europeans. Iran won't sit down with us. So I think we're making a good faith effort, and I do agree with you that while it's sometimes necessary to use force and countries always have that option, it's more often than not the right choice to try to seek a peaceful diplomatic resolution of disputes. I think we're with Europe in that and we're showing that indeed on many issues of the day here in 2007. Thanks very much for your question.

MODERATOR: Now we can move to the general focal point of the Secretary's remarks about transatlantic relationships, the US-Europe relationship.

QUESTION: Do you agree with those who say that after Iraq, missile defense will be the next bone of contention transatlantically? Also in our relations with Russia?

SECRETARY BURNS: I don't think it needs to be. I hope it isn't. I think with reason and with dialogue I think we can work out any misunderstandings that exist.

This is a defensive system. It's not offensive. It represents no threat to any country, certainly not Russia, certainly not any country here in Europe. It provides for longer term defense against those countries that might seek to destabilize the peace here in Europe in the future.

We started talking about missile defense back in 2002 and 2003 at NATO. We had extensive conversations at NATO in both years about this. I think it was clear in 2003, at least when I was ambassador, that there was no consensus among the countries to build an MD system, but there certainly was a consensus on the part of the United States and some of our friends in Central Europe that we ought to have a system built where we will go ahead now and do that. I think with reasoned dialogue we'll be able to answer the questions that countries have posed.

The Russian Federation had a number of questions. We now have a close dialogue with the Russian government on that. I don't think we resolved all the misunderstandings but we'll try to. The same is true with the debate here in Europe. We have a NATO discussion coming up on the 19th of April that we look forward to. I'm sure I'll talk about missile defense tomorrow to my 25 NATO allies, the political directors all coming together. We're here essentially to talk about Afghanistan and Kosovo, but I'm sure we'll talk about missile defense. We welcome the discussion. Any rational person looking at future threats has to account for changes in technology, if Iran or other radical states like Iran acquire long range ballistic missile capability, and if they achieve a technological breakthrough on chemical or nuclear weapons, and Iran is trying to do that. That's why we're all sanctioning them in the Security Council. That is a future threat to Europe as well as to the Arab world, and we want to be defended against that threat.

This system is not at all offensive, it doesn't pose a threat to anyone. Ten or twelve interceptors is not going to pose a threat to Russia. It doesn't stand to reason to argue that.

So we look forward to this debate on missile defense. We think it's a good one to have and it's the right one to have given the future threats that we see out there.

QUESTION: I'd like to thank you first. I have first two questions. [Inaudible] further operations on two sides of Atlantic and also [inaudible]. [Inaudible] discussions

[inaudible] public hearing on [inaudible]. They've been discussing especially exchange of data like PNR, Swift, [inaudible] systems and many other things with related [inaudible] between two sets of [inaudible] partners. What seems to come out very strongly is first of all the type of data collection that we have in Europe, [inaudible] and what you have in the US. And to what extent are these two kinds of models compatible offering same type of guarantees as well as [inaudible] philosophy in a way of [inaudible]? I was wondering whether [inaudible] discussion maybe in the US in view of the regulations [inaudible].

Also related to that, because I know it's [inaudible] same kind of interest is on visa waiver [inaudible]. For the new countries, new EU member states, [inaudible] already has a waiver and Greece. [inaudible].

SECRETARY BURNS: Thank you very much, both good issues.

On data protection and on intellectual property rights and copyrights, these are very important issues. It's kind of the heart of what the EU and the United States need to do to make sure that our systems are not perhaps identical but at least complementary and mutually reinforcing. I think we welcome a debate.

We have interests that we want to see preserved and we think that we can have a successful conversation. I think it speaks to a larger question that is Doha, and whether or not we can use the next few months to achieve a breakthrough in Doha. I know it's very much the wish of my country. When our President was in Latin America two weeks ago he had extensive talks with President Lula. President Lula is coming back to Camp David this coming weekend. We've been in touch with the Indian government and some of the other major actors in this great Doha drama, but we hope for progress.

On visa waiver, we have visa waiver with the majority of countries in the European Union, you know. I was Ambassador to Greece until September 2001. We were just on the verge of achieving visa waiver for Greece when 9/11 occurred. I think 9/11 in our own country, and I think you understand this, made us pause because we had to think through how to defend our borders in a new age where terrorism could reach across those borders, right through them, under them. And so it took us some time, the Congress and our executive branch to come together. President Bush of course said when he was going to Riga in November that now he wishes to see us continue with visa waiver.

It's interesting, when visitors come from Poland, from Hungary, from Romania, and we had Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis of Greece in Washington Friday. Visa waiver is often at the top of their lists, and we understand that. We're working very hard right now with our Congress to see if we can move forward on visa waiver. It's certainly an objective that we want to see occur.

QUESTION: Under Secretary, do you [inaudible] to say that the policy of the United States and [inaudible] created some kind of [inaudible] world? And [inaudible] about the Russia – What word is more appropriate to the US-Russia relations how? The balance of power or working together for a better world?

SECRETARY BURNS: I'm intrigued by the way you phrased the question. It certainly wasn't the policies of the United States that created what you perceive to be a uni-polar world, it was history. It was the collapse of communism and of the Soviet Union. The fact that, and I don't mean to sound arrogant here, but I think objectively that my country finds itself as certainly the most powerful country militarily, economically and politically. That is what history has dealt us, the American people, and our responsibility is to exercise that power responsibly and in concert with others.

We have never set out in our foreign policy, President Clinton didn't, President Bush before him didn't, President Reagan didn't, to create a world where only the United States had power. But in the bi-polar world that was destroyed, that did collapse with the collapse of communism, the United States found itself uniquely powerful. But I think we are people who understand that power and one country's power cannot always triumph when you live in a complicated, interdependent world, where these transnational problems, the dark side of globalization, climate change, trafficking, crime, narcotics, terrorism, WMD – one country along cannot meet those problems.

So I think the fundamental understanding in our society, in our government, in our political class in the United States, is that we need to work with others around the world. We have rebuilt NATO with Europe over the last five to six years successfully. We've modernized the US-EU agenda. We did that after 9/11. We have worked much more closely with Japan and Australia and South Korea and the Pacific. We have new strategic partners in Brazil, in Colombia. The United States has a very important strategic partner in India, one of the most successful relationships that we have globally is with India.

So we understand that in 2007 and for all the future to come, we cannot act alone. And our political history is very much complicated, our national history, by the twin illusions of isolationism and unilateralism. I think most Americans would say to day we can't be either of those things. We can't be isolationist. Not in a globalized world. We can't be unilateralist, not when most of these problems can't be resolved by us alone.

So we live in a world where we have a lot of power, yes. But we want to use that power for the good, peacefully, in concert with others, and that's what our relationship with the EU and NATO is all about. I think a fair accounting of the history of the EU-US relationship going back to 1957, and the history of NATO going back to 1949 is that we have used our power peacefully. We have not tried to claim the territory of other countries. In fact we've often used our power to end wars. We ended the war in Bosnia, NATO did. We ended the war in Kosovo – NATO did that. The EU and NATO have tried to rebuild both of those countries successfully.

I think an important element of the debate we're going to have on Kosovo in the next 30 to 60 days is this. Which countries have made the sacrifice in Kosovo over the last eight years? It's been Europe and the United States: our money, our soldiers, our political effort to rebuild Kosovo and to give it strength and to protect the United Nations mission. So our voice should be very strong in this debate about the future of Kosovo.

QUESTION: Do you think that Russia [inaudible] the change in policies [inaudible] see the light simply through negotiation or will you have to give them something like Abkhazia perhaps? And what are you hearing from China in the Security Council debate?

MODERATOR: We are not negotiating here at -- [Laughter].

SECRETARY BURNS: Poor Ambassador Chizhov has to sit here and listen to all this. [Laughter]. He probably wants to take the floor and defend his country. I don't think Russia has said anything of the like.

Let me take it one at a time.

We are declaring today our support for the Ahtisaari plan and for supervised independence for Kosovo. We are also declaring our wish to work well with Russia over the period ahead. Deputy Foreign Minister Titov and I have agreed to meet, and Secretary Rice and Minister Lavrov have agreed to talk because Russia is, as in so many other issues, a partner on these issues.

We certainly would never support any kind of trade or precedent that would link Kosovo to any other territorial problem in Europe. We would never make that equation, we would never make the linkage, we would never agree to it.

Kosovo is unique. The Kosovar problem arose, as all of you know very well, from the violent destruction of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, from the attempted mass ethnic cleansing of a million people, the worst war crime in Europe since the Nazis, in 1999. And from the fact that UN Resolution 1244 said in June 1999, this is a special case. We, the United Nations, will now undertake the administration of Kosovo.

So what we in the United Nations now need to do in April or May is to say Kosovo should stand on its own. And we would never, ever agree, and I don't think that any country would even suggest, that Kosovo is a precedent that would have an impact on Georgia or Moldova or any other country in Europe. There is no relation between

them.

So we do look forward to a good discussion with the Russian government, because Russia's a permanent member of the Security Council. It's a powerful country. It has its own interests and its own view, and I'm sure Russia will express its views.

But I'm not pessimistic. I think by the end of this process in several weeks time sometime late April, first part of May, I'm sure we'll have a successful outcome that will support the Ahtisaari plan. That's our goal.

MODERATOR: Unfortunately, we must end questions and answers, at least in the plenary, because I know the Secretary has other commitments in Brussels here. So I regret it, but that's how life is.

I would like to thank Under Secretary of State Burns very much for his statement, and also for your questions and answers. Thank you for coming.



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