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Interview with Reporters from the Seven New NATO Member Nations

Secretary Colin L. Powell

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SECRETARY POWELL: Well good afternoon. It's a great pleasure to see you all. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak to press representatives of our seven new NATO members.

It was my great honor and privilege to be the official in Washington this past Monday who actually received the formal accession documents from each of your prime ministers, your heads of government, which made it official. You know, it's called the Washington Treaty and the United States is the depository of the treaty and all of the instruments related to the treaty.

It was a moving moment for me to be in this grand room. After I made a brief speech, to receive these documents being given to the Secretary of State of the United States who, for most of his life was not a diplomat, but was a soldier who used to see these seven countries on the other side of the barrier. A barrier that separated east from west, separated Western Europe from and the United States of America and Canada from nations that we knew the flame of liberty had never gone out in. But for many years you were suppressed and you were dictated to by tyranny. Now to see this transformation in your countries and this transformation in our lives was a deeply moving moment for me. I'm pleased now to have the opportunity to speak with the press about it.

QUESTION: If I may, a question on Russia. Yesterday, Russian Duma adopted a statement criticizing NATO's enlargement and inviting President Putin to reconsider the military deployment near the borders and its capabilities. What counter measures do you expect from Russia to be taken? What can NATO do to answer? What can the United States do?

SECRETARY POWELL: I spoke to the new Russian Foreign Minister last night and he is aware of the deployment of the F-16 fighters to essentially bring the new nations of NATO under NATO air cover. And I don't think they don't feel particularly threatened by four fighters that have been moved to the region.

Dumas are like European legislatures, they are like my Congress: they pass resolutions. But I don't think it will

fundamentally change the strategic situation. I don't sense that the Russians will find it necessary to counter this move with anything that would be either provocative or destabilizing or dangerous. It just isn't the environment that we are living in my judgment, even though the Duma may have passed such a resolution.

In any event, I don't find this to be a reason for heightened nervousness. You are now part of a great Alliance of twenty-six nations, all protected under Article 5.

QUESTION: You don't expect real action, just words?

SECRETARY POWELL: No.

QUESTION: NATO's enlargement – is that a gain in coherence for the Alliance? Isn't a consensus among the twenty-six a big challenge?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes. It's easy to be only one. Then you make a decision and that's it. You do what you say you will do. Two, then you have to ask somebody. Twenty-six is difficult. The European Union is going to twenty-five. That will also be difficult.

But what's amazing is that if you're able to achieve that. We've worked very hard for many years at NATO to achieve consensus at sixteen. It wasn't always sixteen – it grew to sixteen. It takes a lot more explaining. It takes a lot more work. It takes a lot more diplomacy and negotiation. But you can achieve it. We've demonstrated this over the course of NATO's history.

At twenty-six, it will be that much more difficult. Every vote is as important as every other vote. That's the importance of consensus. And so we will have to do more work in explaining our position for the seven new countries that have full rights in the Alliance. It will make it more challenging to achieve consensus. But if we're going after the right kinds of issues and if we're doing something that really is in the best interest of all of our people, then we'll be able to achieve the consensus necessary.

QUESTION: You don't feel it's necessary to introduce the majority vote?

SECRETARY POWELL: No. I think NATO has operated very successfully on the basis of consensus as it has grown in size to sixteen, then to nineteen, and now to twenty-six. I don't see a need right now to move to some different sort of rule. But you know Twenty-six nations, all democratic in a grand Alliance, can make whatever decisions it wishes to as far as how it reaches a decision. But right now, I think consensus has been the rule, it has worked well, and we'll continue to seek consensus.

QUESTION: Yes, but last year there was a problem in reaching a decision on protecting Turkey before the conflict in Iraq. With twenty-six members, it will be even more of a difficulty to bring consensus.

SECRETARY POWELL: It will be more challenging. It will take more work. But the alternative is that you ignore the views of some members. That really has not been the history or the tradition of NATO, to say that us sixteen of twenty-six, or ten of sixteen, or sixteen of nineteen, we decide what the others will do. Because the whole basis of the Alliance is

that everybody must agree. This has worked well and I don't see any reason to change it. There may be instances where you can't achieve consensus, in which case then NATO is unable to act as a full Alliance, but maybe members of the Alliance will respond, as was the case with Turkey.

QUESTION: What do you think will be the contribution of the new member countries to reach that consensus, on Iraq for example?

SECRETARY POWELL: It is up to each country to make that decision. I'm pleased that – when you look at the seven new members – they have, for the most part, agreed with what the U.S. is doing in Afghanistan and in Iraq. All seven are participating in Afghanistan in some capacity. Six of the seven are contributing in one way or another to our efforts in Iraq and also are contributing to the campaign against terrorism. So at this point, the United States is pleased that we have good bilateral relations with each one of the seven, and that we are cooperating within the Alliance.

But as a practical matter, we have been acting as if these seven countries have been in the Alliance for some time. Really we just went through the formalities of it this past week. We will have the flag raising ceremony tomorrow in front of the NATO Headquarters, which will be a beautiful site to see.

But there will come times, and the strength of the Alliance will be tested when these times come, when there is serious disagreement over an issue. Where Latvia just does not want to do what the United States may want to do at that time. And Latvia will have a full voice out, as will Lithuania, Estonia and all of the countries represented in this room to speak up and say, "I don't agree with you! And since I am one of twenty-six, I have every right to say to the United States of America, or to France or Spain or Great Britain, I don't agree with you!" And we will argue and we will not give you the consensus you want. Then we will have to spend a lot more time talking about it or thinking about it. And there have been instances in the history of the Alliance when you have not been able to achieve consensus, as you mentioned earlier. The United States position is that we should do everything we can to achieve consensus and act as an Alliance. But there may be occasions when because of our national interests or the interests of one or more of the parties, we feel it is necessary to get a coalition of members to act. But that's not the Alliance acting.

Right now in Iraq, NATO is examining what role it might be able to play. We'll talk about it tomorrow at the NATO meeting and we'll talk about it at the Istanbul Summit. So we don't yet have a NATO role for Iraq the way we have for Afghanistan. But it took time to get NATO to take a positive role, an Alliance role in Afghanistan. With respect to Iraq, we have not reached that point yet. But, look – most of the nations of NATO are in Iraq working with the coalition. So, is NATO in Iraq? Not as an Alliance agreed to at the consensus level, but most of the nations of NATO believe in what we're doing in Iraq and have contributed forces to include six of the seven nations sitting here.

QUESTION: But would you say the position of the U.S. would be more comfortable than before because all of the seven countries signed the accord (inaudible) declaration in which they supported action in Iraq?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I'm pleased that they did. And I'm pleased that – so far, anyway – with respect to Iraq, the seven new nations are supportive of what we are doing.

But let's not just focus on the issue of the day. Let's talk about an Alliance that's going to last for decades and decades. I hope that the seven nations are always in agreement with the United States. I hope that all of your countries believe that

the United States will always be in agreement with you. But it's an Alliance of democratic nations and there should be disagreements. There should be debate. There should be argument. There should be questioning. That's what a democracy is all about.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask you two questions. One maybe not so much related to the new countries. But, then again, it's always present. You've recently been to Iraq on the first anniversary of the war. How are your personal feelings about what's going on? We read about incidents there everyday. Take yesterday for example. How do you feel about what's going on there?

SECRETARY POWELL: Obviously, I share the distress and the agony that the whole world feels when they see scenes like the kind that came out of Fallujah yesterday of bodies being mutilated and hanged – hanging them from bridges. One has to feel terrible about such things. I wish there was no security problem. I wish that those former regime elements and the terrorists who are in Iraq were not there. But they are there, and they have to be defeated. We will defeat them. It will take time. More lives will be lost, and I regret that. But they have to be defeated.

Because while we were looking at the images of terrible things happening in a place like Fallujah and bombs going off in Baghdad, there are other images that are just as powerful and more important, but they don't get the same amount of attention. The oil is flowing, and the money from the sale of oil is going directly to the Iraqi governing council, which can then be used to help rebuild their country. The images you don't see are schools that are being built, hospitals supplies that are going in, roads that are being worked on, a port that is being opened and town councils that have been formed so that the people in those towns, in those communities can speak, have a voice.

You don't see as much attention given to the new administrative law that was passed by the Governing Council that gives the Iraqi people rights they have never enjoyed. Independent judiciary; the military under civilian control; human rights protected; religious rights protected; an Islamic state, but it will not have all of its law rest on the basis of religion, but rest on the basis of universal human rights; reconstruction activity taking place as a result of donations from around the world and \$18 billion in supplemental money from the American Congress; an Interim Government being formed that will take over on the first of July.

And, above all, a society and political system being built that will rest on the rule of law, that will not be threatening its neighbors, will no longer ever again in the future deal with weapons of mass destruction, will no longer murder its citizens and put them in mass graves, and will no longer oppress its people. These are the good things. These are the things we are fighting for. These are the things that we will achieve. We must be successful. We cannot go backwards and allow these villains and murderers to steal this dream from the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people deserve freedom and democracy and they're going to get it. As horrible as these pictures are, it should not scare us with respect to the challenge ahead, but reinforce our determination to be successful, so that the rule of law prevails and the rule of jungle and the rule of car bombs do not prevail.

QUESTION: So you're not having any second thoughts?

SECRETARY POWELL: No.

QUESTION: Actually (inaudible), right now with the events in Madrid as well, there are talks that there is a need for closer cooperation between Europe and the United States in the fight against terrorism. How do you envision such

closer cooperation? And how do you think the enlargement of NATO can contribute?

SECRETARY POWELL: Certainly the enlargement of NATO will help. There should be greater coordination and work between us. I'm pleased that the European Union designated an individual to be its counter-terrorism chief earlier this week. That certainly shows the European Union's recognition of the need for closer cooperation towards nations. We need to do more in terms of tracking terrorists across borders from one country to another. We need to do more with respect to tracking their financial activities and how their funds flow. We need to do more with respect to exchanging intelligence information, law enforcement information, expanding the work of Interpol and similar organizations. I think with the opportunity that comes from membership in the NATO Alliance – the opportunity to meet more, speak more and have common procedures among NATO members, it should certainly help us in the war against terrorism.

What Madrid should say to us is that nobody is immune. What kind of Europe will we have? What kind of Euro-Atlantic alliance will we have? What kind of future will we have? If people can just go bomb a train that is going in on a bright morning to take people to work and children to school. A train that has Christians and Muslims and Jews. And just bomb it. And this is supposed to scare us or to be afraid as to say "Oh dear, there are terrorists, let's back away. Let's not get involved with the world because there are terrorists." Terrorism isn't something new.

In the country I just left – in Germany – when I was stationed there as a corps commander seventeen years ago, I was the number one target for terrorists in the central part of Germany in the state of Hesse and Rhineland Pfalz around Frankfurt. American military commander was the number one target by whom? Who was I being targeted by? The Bader-Meinhoff Gang and the Red Army. They were terrorists. They are gone. There are other terrorists who have come and gone.

In due course, Al Qaeda will be gone because the civilized world won't tolerate them. The civilized world will destroy them. You have no choice. You have to fight this kind of terrorism. The Spaniards have been fighting ETA for so many years. They are still there and they have to be defeated. Al Qaeda has to be defeated and must be defeated.

QUESTION: I have a specific question to Lithuania but it's very important for Lithuanians concerning the scandal going on with Lithuania's President. During those several months the U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, Mr. Stephen Mull has visited our President several times where the Ambassadors of other countries were sort of avoiding him. And you also keep saying that everything is all right [inaudible] don't worry in that his personal initiative and opinion or is it the view of the USA position to defend our discredited President?

SECRETARY POWELL: He is your President, and whether he has been discredited or not is a matter for the Lithuanian people to decide and you have a procedure underway now that will make that judgment. But as far as we are concerned, he was the elected President of the country, and we dealt with him until such time as the people of Lithuania could come to a different conclusion. This is a matter that the Lithuanian people have to decide. The Ambassador when he speaks, speaks in the name of the United States government.

QUESTION: But in this case, a country who's President has met with a Russian businessman who in his turn is linked with the Russian military complex, at least. Can a country like this be a reliable member and partner?

SECRETARY POWELL: The country can be a reliable member and partner, of that we are sure. It is up to the Lithuanian people and their legal procedures to determine not just links but actual responsibility and guilt for something. This is a matter I will leave to Lithuanian judicial authorities and legislative authorities. It goes to an impeachment situation, for Lithuania to

decide. And whatever Lithuania decides within its constitutional prerogative to decide, the United States will be supportive of it.

QUESTION: What will happen if Poland and Spain will pull out their troops from Iraq? Should some new members send more troops into Iraq?

SECRETARY POWELL: I hope the new members will do as much as they can to support the coalition in Iraq. The Polish government has made it clear that they will stay. The new Spanish Prime Minister Designate said that he will pull his troops out unless there is a new UN Resolution that gives the UN political control. I don't know that any UN Resolution would go that far, so the Spanish government is sovereign, free to make their own judgment and we'll respect that judgment. I hope that the new Spanish Prime Minister once he gets in office will review the situation and maybe come to a different conclusion. But he is answerable only to the Spanish people.

I hope the others will remain steadfast. In fact, what I have seen so far is steadfastness on the part of the other coalition members who are there, even in the face of the new Spanish Prime Minister's statement. The others have remained steadfast. The Bratislava statement that said we will stick with it because I think the other members of the coalition knew what they were getting into when they went. There was no confusion in their minds. They're going to be steadfast. If they can have more troops, that would be fine. We welcome them.

QUESTION: I would like to ask on this, discussions on [inaudible] American forces [inaudible] which concerns Bulgaria and Romania. And can we consider this as part of NATO enlargement?

SECRETARY POWELL: The rebasing issue is still under study within the United States government, and Secretary Rumsfeld is continuing to look at what our needs are in Europe, what our needs are elsewhere in the world, and no decisions have been made with respect to any specific country or any specific base. Overall there will be a reduction in the number of troops in Europe.

When I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, there was a significant reduction. In the early '90s we had 315,000 and I brought it down to something like 150,000. It's well below that now. It will become smaller. It's a necessary thing to do.

But I know Mr. Rumsfeld and his military officials and the military officials in the NATO Alliance have been looking at various facilities that might be used for training purposes or for access or for intermediate staging areas to go somewhere else. But that is still all under consideration and no decisions have been made yet. I can't tell you when Mr. Rumsfeld will finish his work.

QUESTION: Again on Russia, the country has not yet withdrawn troops from Moldova and Georgia, and what should NATO do to make Russia fulfill its commitments? Do you see it possible to ratify the treaty on conventional forces in Europe before Russia has done it, withdrawal of troops?

SECRETARY POWELL: We discuss this with the Russians on every occasion that we meet with them. I discussed it with the new Foreign Minister last night, Sergei Lavrov. And They are of course very interested in seeing everyone ratify the adapted CFE treaty, but we made it clear to the Russians that we believe a pre-condition for that is for them to comply with their Istanbul agreements of 1999 and withdraw from Moldova and Georgia. They do not see the two linked. We tell them they are linked. They're clearly linked, and this is a precondition before we can expect the other countries to ratify the adapted CFE Treaty and that will remain our position.

We'll have to find a way forward on this because the Russians do not – the Russians are working with the Georgians and the Moldovans and the Transdnestrians to come up with a plan for movement out of these bases. There is a debate over how long it should take, what difficulties will be encountered in the removal of these bases and troops and the expenses involved. Mr. Lavrov said to me last night that they are in consultations with the Georgians with respect to those bases and also with the Moldovans and the Transdnestrians with respect to the removal of their stocks in Moldova and their bases in Moldova.

QUESTION: Just the last question on Russia, just a few months ago you expressed some concerns that Russia, this level of democracy is not sufficient and rule of law. Has the recent president elections somehow diminished your concerns? And do you have some plans for improving the situation, [inaudible] the situation with such big partner.

SECRETARY POWELL: President Putin received an overwhelming vote of support from the Russian people. He has brought a sense of order to the country after the years of Yeltsin, which were quite disorderly. And the economy has improved. So the Russian people are satisfied with the leadership that President Putin is giving to the country. And they ought to be. He's improved things, he has cracked down on corruption, he has cracked down on those who, some of those who have exploited.

What we have said to President Putin directly, and I've talked to him and I've talked to my Russian colleagues, that this is good but be cautious about some of the things you're doing in order to create the sense of order. There shouldn't be constraints on the press. Be careful how you allow people to participate in an election that doesn't have access to the media, so that they can participate fully and openly in civil society.

And we don't feel it is a sign of enmity towards the Russians when we point out certain things to them having to do with what we believe are universal standards of openness and human rights and democracy. And the Russians listened carefully. Sometimes they respond, other times they don't respond, and other times they think about what we have discussed.

The important point is that I can sit across the table as close as I am from Edita [Secretary motions to the reporter directly across the table], as close as Edita is from me with President Putin, and talk about these things openly and debate them and argue them and to argue with the Russian Foreign Minister and argue with the Russian Defense Minister as to who's right, who's wrong, how fast they can move in removing the Georgian bases and how slow they can move in removing the Georgian bases. We can have these kinds of discussions. Fifteen years ago, we'd go on alert and mobilize armies. Now we don't. We talk.

QUESTION: Just to follow on Russia, maybe this will be the last question. We have an impression that the USA is trying by all means to give very good relationship with Russia and I think the Baltic states feel kind of progressive pressure from Russia in attempts to still keep them in its influence zone. How, according to you in this, one can construe it so different views on Russia from Baltic states and other new members and the USA, and how can we have a - in this context, have a common NATO's policy toward Russia? A defined common NATO's policy.

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we do have a defined common policy toward Russia. We have created the NATO/Russia Council. It will meet tomorrow for the first time with Sergei Lavrov as Foreign Minister representing Russia. We're cooperating with Russia in many areas with respect to terrorism. Russia is always, I'll put this most delicately, very interested in what is happening in the countries that are immediately around Russia. Russia has had this fear during the Cold War, before the Cold War, since the Cold War, that somehow they are in danger of being surrounded. So, whenever

we are doing something, for example in the Caucuses or in Central Asia, we have to spend a great deal of time discussing with our Russian friends how this is not a threat to Russia.

When we first went into Afghanistan and when we were getting access from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, this was of interest and concern to the Russians. But my good friend Igor Ivanov, the former Foreign Minister who has now stepped up to be National Security Advisor, he once told a Russian audience, a Russian interrogator like you, Edita, said to him, "What's going on? Why do you let those Americans run all over our back yard? Why are you surrounding us again? We thought that went away with the Cold War." And Minister Ivanov's response was, "Yes, they are in Central Asia but this time we're working together. We have common enemies." And the reporter, "What common enemies?" "Terrorism, drug trafficking, smuggling, illegal immigration." These are threats to Russia, these are threats to the United States, these are threats to Europe, these are threats to the region. So the United States and Russia now have ways to cooperate with one another, working together in areas where it was unthinkable for us to work together years ago.

I understand the unique position of the Baltic states and their concern about their very, very large neighbor and your past history with that large neighbor. But the United States in all the years of the Cold War never accepted that the Baltic states had ever lost their real purpose or their real independence. It was merely an accident of history that would be corrected. It has now been corrected. You have been free since the end of the Soviet Union, and what you really have going for you now, which should give you comfort, is the fact that you are formally part of a great alliance.

You probably did not listen to my speech the other day – Did you? There was a line in there, and there was a line in my remarks at the accession ceremony that said "welcome to the alliance and everything, and you are now under Article 5." You know what Article 5 is, it's the heart of the Washington Treaty – collective security. When one is threatened, all are threatened. All respond. So this should give the Baltic states a degree of confidence and a degree of comfort they've never enjoyed in the last 100 years.

QUESTION: But this concerns only direct threats. Sometimes threat is not direct.

SECRETARY POWELL: True. Sometimes it's not overt aggression.

QUESTION: Like President [inaudible] sometimes shows it, that Russia is trying also to influence [inaudible].

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, Russia is an important country. We want to have good relations with Russia. We want you to have good relations with Russia. We don't want you to choose between having good relations with the United States and bad relations with Russia or vice versa.

We have said to all and we said it the other day at the ceremony, the President spoke in the Cabinet Room to all of your Prime Ministers. And he said "it is not our desire for you to have to choose between the United States and Europe, between the United States and Russia. You are sovereign nations. Make your own choice, but know that in the United States you have a strong partner. You may be small, you may not have great wealth yet, you may not have large populations and you may not have large armies. What you do have is a large friend in the United States and a large friend in this great alliance that you are now part of."

So, Russia will try to exercise its influence and I think it's something that we will have to watch and we'll have to deal with. But the kinds of dangers that the Baltic states and the other states that accessed the other day, the kinds of dangers you faced for

so many many years, those dangers are gone. Nervousness remains but the real danger is gone.

QUESTION: May I have a last question about Russia. [Laughter]

SECRETARY POWELL: What is going on?

QUESTION: Big neighbor.

SECRETARY POWELL: No, no, no. Of course. I'm not insensitive to this. And over the last three years. I've had many meetings with the Foreign Ministers of the seven nations, either one on one or in groups. and I'm not unmindful of the history. I'm not unmindful of the pasts that you are coming out of. So I'm not surprised that you have this focus on Russia.

QUESTION: I want to ask, how do you think maybe should Russia apologize for the Soviet various crimes as Germany has done about Nazi's various crimes. Maybe would be good for relations between Baltic states and Russia.

SECRETARY POWELL: I hadn't thought of that question. I think it's a question that you all should put to Russia, but I haven't given any thought to it. I don't know, I'm not sure that the Russians would view their actions quite the same way that the Germans viewed their actions, therefore I would be surprised if Russia would take the kind of action to correct that you're suggesting. I just haven't given it much thought. Maybe it's a question you should put to the Russians in due course. Have your Minister put it to the NATO/Russia Council.

QUESTION: As former military do you think your U.S. thinking about drug trafficking and arms smuggling in this war against terrorism, as a military what do you think? Is this war a war for the military or rather for the police or border patrols, for the people tracing terrorists on the [inaudible]?

SECRETARY POWELL: It's a war that has to be fought on many fronts. One, the biggest part of this war is getting our young people to stop using, to educate young people, and not so young people, not to use these drugs. As long as there is a demand for these drugs somebody will try to supply that demand. That's basic economics. So in the United States it's a war in the streets for the minds of our children and to protect our children from those who would sell these drugs to them and educate our children. In recent years our drug rates have started to decline. I think it's shown that the young people have gotten smarter, and as we've been tougher with respect to punishment. That's the first line of defense.

Then I think it is basically a police, border control, interdiction problem. But because it is such a great danger to our societies, then we should also be prepared to use our military.

In Afghanistan right now one of the great sources of drugs coming to Europe principally is located in Afghanistan, in the poppy fields. So we should use whatever resources are there. The Afghan army, coalition forces that are there, to do something to destroy those crops and also to help the Afghan people who now are dependent on those crops find another livelihood or some other crop to grow.

The United States uses our military forces to interdict drugs coming from South America and Latin America, and Central America into the United States. It is such a destructive enemy that we should use all elements of our power to attack it.

QUESTION: Speaking about Afghanistan again, are you going to expand operations in Afghanistan? And if they haven't been so far, why the delay? Was it a lack of political will to expand operations in Afghanistan? And what forces would be engaged in this?

SECRETARY POWELL: NATO has taken over there, the Alliance tomorrow when we meet will discuss what additional forces might be available. I would like to see additional forces go in there over the next couple of months in order to secure the country for the elections that are going to be held in September: Additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams, additional forces that could provide area security for the election. I can't tell you what the numbers will be, but I have reason to believe that there will be some additions made, and not only just from NATO, but from other countries. Earlier this morning in Berlin, the New Zealanders talked about their Provincial Reconstruction Team and how they're going to keep it there for a longer period of time. So this is a mission not just for NATO, but for all nations that believe that the Afghan people deserve a better future.

QUESTION: If I can go back to the enlargement process. Secretary, three more countries are waiting for the decision. Are you in favor of taking them to complete the picture?

SECRETARY POWELL: I'm in favor of continuing to leave the Alliance open for new members and I hope that Albanian, Croatia and Macedonia will fulfill all of the requirements for membership and that at some time in the future we will be able to welcome them into the Alliance as well. And even after that the Alliance is still open to additional members. The Prime Ministers of Croatia, Macedonia and Albania were at the ceremonies on Monday watching with great interest and hoping that the day will come when they will be up on the stage, having just given the instruments of accession to an American Secretary of State. So yes, I would welcome them when they are qualified and prepared for the obligations of membership.

QUESTION: My question is on European Union common security, establishing a headquarters and European army. So how many armies we might need for this purpose? So far so good for Bulgaria and Romania because we are only NATO members, but for the rest of the countries, don't you think it's going to be doubling functions, NATO and EU?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we have been able to work with the European Union in creating a model to approach this question, which is called Berlin Plus, the Berlin Plus model. We don't need an EU army. Under Berlin Plus when a crisis emerges or when a situation emerges or arises that looks like it needs military force, NATO will be the organization that we will go to first. EU agrees with that, of course NATO agrees with that. NATO will examine it and determine whether there is consensus to undertake the operation or whether there is, for one reason or another, not consensus. This is something NATO has to do. If NATO chooses not to do it but the EU thinks that it should be done and they can do it, then they will make a determination. The first determination they will make is do they need NATO assets to help them perform the mission? They can come to NATO and NATO will provide them with lift of intelligence capability, whatever might be needed. Or the European Union might decide this is a small humanitarian operation, a small peacekeeping operation. It's not that far away, it's not that difficult to do, so we will do it just as the EU with no use of NATO assets. Then they will get a coalition of willing nations out of the European Union to do it and draw from those nations.

I don't see a large European Union standing army that will compete with NATO. And the European Union has said that they will create a small planning cell within EU headquarters that will monitor this kind of activity, but they will also have liaison in NATO Headquarters so that planning can take place there.

So I think we have worked it out in a way that will not be competition, and in fact will be a division of effort when one of

these problems comes along. If it's a big crisis that requires troops to go in and perform a serious military mission, that's going to be NATO. The European Union doesn't have that capacity. But if it's a mid-sized, peacekeeping operation or some kind of humanitarian operation or to put down a small problem that may well be within the capacity of the EU to handle.

QUESTION: Are you concerned that the state of terrorism is becoming more acute in the sense that there are more attacks? That countries that have went along with the United States to Iraq and other places are not feeling more jeopardized and maybe will behave the same way as Spain has decided to behave, which could then actually deprive your own active role which is obviously difficult if you were to do it alone.

SECRETARY POWELL: I've seen the contrary. I've seen all nations come together in the aftermath of the Madrid bombing, in the aftermath of the Istanbul bombing, in the aftermath of the Riyadh bombing, of all the bombings that have taken place over the last year or year and a half, more and more people have come to the realization that they are not safe. Bali, anywhere. It can happen anywhere.

It happened since Iraq, it happened before Iraq. Terrorism just didn't start on the day that the United States invaded Iraq. It has been with us in many forms. It is particularly virulent right now because of al Qaeda and because of their determination to show that they can dictate to civilized nations, what civilized nations will do, just because they're afraid of being bombed. We cannot let that happen. And Even in Spain which has a different point of view from us with respect to Iraq, the new Prime Minister has a different point of view with respect to Iraq, But at the same time that new Prime Minister has also said he wants to work to defeat terrorism in Europe by participating in intelligence exchanges and going after the financial activities. So the new Prime Minister of Spain, even though he has a difference of opinion with us with respect to his troops being in Iraq, he has no difference of opinion with us with respect to going after terrorism. And if anything, he's more committed to that and Spain is more committed to that than before that attack.

The Spaniards I think will be working with us on terrorism. This is not the time to get fearful or to take counsel of our fears. This is time to go after these terrorist organizations. Organizations such as this have been defeated in the past- When people got tired of them, get tired of their false political agenda and were willing to take them on. We've defeated them, I point out again, what we were able to do in Europe with Bader-Meinhoff and the Red Army faction and similar organizations, they're all now gone. Those people are in jail. They're in their 60s and still in jail or barely coming out and they don't want to be terrorists any more. So terrorism can be defeated and we have to defeat it.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much.

*Reporters in the roundtable:

Mr. Bozo Masanovic, Delo (Slovenian daily)
Ms. Hana Lesenarova, Pravda (Slovak daily)
Ms Monica Milosecu, RADOR News Agency (Romanian news agency)
Ms. Betina Zhoteva, Trud (Bulgarian daily)
Mr. Alo Llohmus, Postimees (Estonian daily)
Ms Evita Pruina, Diena (Latvian daily)

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