



## Interview by Hamid Mir of GEO TV

**Secretary Colin L. Powell**  
Islamabad, Pakistan  
March 18, 2004

**MR. MIR:** Hello, Assalam-O-Alaikum, I am Hamid Mir, and today we have with us a very special guest who says that U.S.- Pakistan partnership is not a temporary marriage of convenience and Pakistan is a non-NATO ally of U.S. And the name of our special guest is U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell. Thank you for joining us.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** How do you do. Assalam-O-Alaikum.

**MR. MIR:** First of all, I would like to know that do you want Pakistan to open its nuclear facilities for international inspections?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, that's a decision for Pakistan to make. What we really want to do is to be able to work with Pakistan on surety, as we call security issues, and we had meetings earlier this week with the Pakistanis' authority. I think each country that has nuclear weapons has to do their very best it can to make sure that they are safe and secure and reliable and so that there are no accidents take place and no chance of leakage and so we have some experience with this and we want to share that experience with our Pakistani colleagues.

**MR. MIR:** Do you want Pakistan to sign N.P.T.?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It's up to Pakistan, it is a, it is a, nuclear power...

**MR. MIR:** No U.S. pressure?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well you know we always leave such matters to Pakistani authorities. Perhaps the President and I will have a conversation about it later.

**MR. MIR:** You have very recently stated that Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan is cooperating with the investigator. Would you like to explain that what kind of cooperation he has extended to the investigators and are you satisfied with his cooperation?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well Dr. Khan, of course, acknowledged that he had been providing this nuclear technology to other states, besides the work he had done for Pakistan. And I know that he is very highly regarded in Pakistan for his contribution to the Pakistan nuclear program. But the work he has done to provide this technology to many others, I think has been very, very dangerous. I'm glad he has acknowledged it. And the Pakistani government has been interrogating him and his associates and has been providing us information. We have a mutual goal, the United States and Pakistan, it's to make sure that Dr. Khan's network is fully uncovered and pulled up in every possible way, root and branches as they say, because I don't think either any Pakistani or any American would like to see this work get into the hands of the wrong people and it has. It's been given to North Korea, it's been given to Libya, and we all have a mutual interest to bring this to an end.

**MR. MIR:** The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, recently demanded that international community must recognize Pakistan as a nuclear power. What are your comments?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, that's his statement. We know Pakistan has nuclear weapons. It's no secret any longer.

**MR. MIR:** But Pakistan is not member of the nuclear club?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It has nuclear weapons. Now whether it is a member of the club or not, we know it has nuclear weapons and a certain obligation comes to any nation that has these kinds of weapons, and that is to make sure that they are safe and secure. I wish we lived in a world where there were no nuclear weapons, neither Pakistan, India, United States, or anyone else.

I am proud of the fact that as a soldier I presided over a large inventory of nuclear weapons and reduced that inventory significantly during the time that I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in the years following. And so nuclear weapons are here. We don't want to see any more nations find a need to develop nuclear weapons.

**MR. MIR:** Why have coalition forces failed to hunt Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, he is working hard to keep from being found. And we don't know exactly where he is. In fact, we can't even be sure that he is still alive. But we are going under the assumption that he is alive.

**MR. MIR:** So you are not sure that he is alive?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, no one has seen him so how can one be sure? But he has certainly given evidence that he is alive and active. But we can't be sure. And if he is alive and active, and the evidence suggests that he is, and if he is in the area of the Pakistan-Afghan border, that's a very difficult area to find someone who doesn't want to be found. But we are looking -- our troops on the Afghan side of the border. And we have been encouraging our Pakistani friends to do as much as they can in the tribal areas and the other remote sections of the Pakistan border. It is in no one's interest for the Taliban to be able to operate freely or for al-Qaeda to operate freely along this border area. And that's why we are cooperating so much with the Pakistan government in trying to capture these people. They are having a destabilizing influence in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

**MR. MIR:** Do you plan to send fresh troops to Afghanistan?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we rotate our troops on a regular basis. We have no plans to significantly increase the number of troops there. But they rotate and fresh troops come in on a regular basis. We do intend to keep a military presence there as long as the danger exists.

**MR. MIR:** You said that Pakistan is a non-NATO ally of U.S. Do you want that Pakistan must allow U.S. troops to allow, to operate, in Pakistan for assisting Pakistani forces against the terrorists groups?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** There is no connection, no relationship between these two. Major non-NATO ally gives Pakistan access to more material than they might otherwise have access to. And it's a status we extend to those countries that we have good relations with and we want to have better relations with. There is no connection between that and our operations along the border. Pakistan is a sovereign nation and we would not do anything to violate its sovereignty.

**MR. MIR:** Would you like to comment on the ongoing operation in the Pakistani tribal area recently, the one operation?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** I'd like to express my condolences to the families of members of the Frontier Corp who lost their lives. They were attacking the enemies of Pakistan, and they showed bravery and they showed courage, and I regret some of their lives were lost and others were injured. And I just compliment them on their bravery, serving their nation.

**MR. MIR:** Do you think that Kashmir is a central issue between India and Pakistan?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** It is an issue certainly and that is why it is one of the issues that was included in the agreement of 6 January and as both sides understand, is an issue that will have to be discussed in due course. I am pleased that a map has been laid out now of how these issues will be dealt with over a period of time. And it's a matter for the two sides to resolve between them, keeping of course, in mind the interest and the aspirations and desires of the Kashmiri people.

**MR. MIR:** Can you say that year 2004 will be the year of the resolution of Kashmir dispute?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Oh, I can't answer that. It's a dispute that's been here for many years, over fifty years, and I just hope that the two sides will enter into positive discussions as part of this new framework they have created. But I would not be able to predict when this particular situation would be resolved.

**MR. MIR:** Because despite the "cricket diplomacy" going on these days here in Pakistan, there is exchange of hot words between the foreign offices of India and Pakistan on this issue, that whether Kashmir is a central issue or not.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well I will let them debate this. All I know is that it's part of the dialogue that was agreed upon on the 6th of January. Kashmir is on the agenda. And so that is what we should look at, this dialogue. It is an historic new beginning for the two sides. Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf showed great courage and great statesmanship entering into this agreement, here in Islamabad on the 6th of January. And let's use that process, that road map, to get answers to these very difficult questions.

**MR. MIR:** In the end, I would like that you must say something for our viewers in United States, because GEO TV was launched recently in U.S.A. also.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Oh I'm so pleased to hear this news that Pakistani-Americans will now be able to see this station and to hear my words. And I want to say hello to all my Pakistani-American friends. It is a very vibrant community in the United States, and they remain vitally interested in everything that is happening in Pakistan. Even though they may have lived in America for decades, they look to Pakistan as their first home. Just as my parents looked to where they came from, Jamaica, as their first home. And I just ask them to continue to be interested in Pakistan and to do something else. As they gain success and wealth in the United States, share some of that success, share some of that wealth, more than they have perhaps in the past with those who are in need here in Pakistan.

**MR. MIR:** Thank you very much.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you, sir.

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