SEIZING THE MOMENT

By Secretary of State Colin L. Powell

“International terrorism poses a multidimensional threat. Our coalition must use every tool of statecraft to defeat it,” says Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. “This will be a long, hard campaign, measured in years and fought on many fronts. For such an effort, our coalition will have the flexibility to evolve. And the very process of participating in this great global campaign against terrorism may well open the door for us to strengthen or reshape international relationships and expand or establish areas of cooperation.”

The mass murders that were committed on September 11 under the direction of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network have united the world against international terrorism. Some 80 countries lost citizens in the attacks. From our shared grief and shared resolve can come new opportunities not only to defeat terrorism, but also to work with other nations on a range of important issues of global concern.

A host of countries and international organizations have answered President Bush’s call for a worldwide coalition to combat terrorism — among them NATO, the European Union, the Organization of American States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the U.N. General Assembly and Security Council. Indeed, the Security Council unanimously adopted an historic resolution obliging all 189 U.N. member states to stop terrorist travel, money flows, planning and other support, and to cooperate in bringing terrorists to justice.

International terrorism poses a multidimensional threat. Our coalition must use every tool of statecraft to defeat it. Some countries will take part in the military response against those involved in the atrocities of September 11. Others, while not participating directly in military action, will provide logistical support or access to bases and staging areas or overflight rights. And many will contribute to humanitarian efforts to help the millions of innocent Afghans who have suffered under the Taliban regime — a regime which seems to care more about Osama bin Laden and his terrorists than its own starving citizens. Coalition members also will work to disrupt and destroy terrorist networks by sharing intelligence and other critical information, cooperating in law enforcement, and cutting off terrorists’ financial lifelines.

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Already, our alliances in Europe, Asia and the Western Hemisphere have been reinvigorated by invocations of the collective defense provisions of the NATO, ANZUS and Rio Treaties.

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s reaction to September 11 marked the beginning of a new period in our bilateral relationship, one in which a new spirit of cooperation on counterterrorism may also make many of the tough issues on the agenda more resolvable. Indeed, in the wake of 11 September, it has become clear that not only is the Cold War over, but the post-Cold War period is also over.

China has also contributed meaningfully to this unprecedented global effort. I am confident that as we advance our counterterrorism cooperation with China
we will be in a stronger position to sustain meaningful consultations with the leadership in Beijing on other subjects of importance to us.

We have also seized opportunities to improve our relations with Pakistan and India. President Musharaff of Pakistan made the strategic decision to end his government’s support of the Taliban. As a result of the actions taken by Pakistan in support of our campaign, we can see the beginning of a strengthened relationship that will grow and thrive in the years ahead.

Well before September 11, President Bush made it clear that putting our relationship with India on a higher plane is one of his highest priorities. With the strong support we have received from the Indian government since September 11, we are seizing the opportunity to accelerate the pace of change.

Our improved relations with these two South Asian rivals may now present an opportunity for both countries to explore new ways of thinking about stability on the Subcontinent.

The millions of our fellow Americans of the Islamic faith, and the ten Muslim nations who lost citizens in the September 11 attacks, need no convincing that the killers and their accomplices pervert Islam when they use it to justify their appalling crimes. Out of a deep sense of shared humanity, and a chilling appreciation of common vulnerability to terrorism, we see new scope to strengthen our relations with the Islamic world.

In this global campaign, the United States welcomes the help of any country or party that is genuinely prepared to work with us, but we will not relax our standards and we will continue to advance our fundamental interests in human rights, accountable government, free markets, non-proliferation and conflict resolution, for we believe that a world of democracy, opportunity, and stability is a world in which terrorism cannot thrive.

Throughout the campaign against international terrorism, the dedicated men and women of the State Department at our posts abroad and here in Washington will be on the front lines just as surely as those who wear the uniform.

We will not let terrorism hijack American foreign policy. The President has urged the American people to get back to the business of their daily lives. So too, the United States will continue to pursue a full international agenda — from promoting good governance to cooperating with other countries to stem the HIV/AIDS pandemic, establish a post-Cold War strategic framework, launch a new trade round, and foster peace in the Middle East.

Terrorism has cast a shadow across the globe. But the global resolve to defeat it has never been greater and the prospects for international cooperation across a broad range of issues has never been brighter. As President Bush said the other day when he visited the State Department: “Out of this evil will come good. Through our tears we see opportunities to make the world better for generations to come. And we will seize them.”

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