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## Remarks with His Excellency Joschka Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany,

**Secretary Colin L. Powell**

Washington, DC

November 20, 2001

11:10 A.M. EST

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's been my pleasure, once again, to receive my good friend and guest, Joschka Fischer, the Foreign Minister of Germany. We, as always, had a good discussion of the issues that interest us the most and are on our platter. We talked about Afghanistan, the next steps politically, diplomatically, and militarily. I had the chance to again thank the Minister for the very strong support that Germany has provided to us since the 11th of September, and as part of building the coalition.

We also talked about some European regional issues, and we also talked about the Middle East, and I had a chance to share with Mr. Fischer the responses that I have received from the speech I gave yesterday. I was pleased that Prime Minister Sharon has announced the formation of the committee that I referred to yesterday, and will welcome the visit of Assistant Secretary Burns and General Zinny in the not-too-distant future. And I was also very pleased at the response from Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. Chairman Arafat called me as soon as I got back to Washington yesterday to express his satisfaction with the speech and to say that he was ready to cooperate.

And I have also had other expressions from Amre Moussa, the Chairman of the Arab League, and others. So we have a new opportunity before us, an opportunity that I hope both parties will seize, and the United States will do its part. And it has always been reassuring to have the strong support of Minister Fischer and his government. Minister Fischer travels through the region on a fairly regular basis, and I have always welcomed his counsel and advice on these matters, and I know that I will continue to receive that in the months ahead.

So Joschka, once again, welcome.

**FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER:** Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure for me on this nice morning to be here in Washington. And, first of all, I want to congratulate my colleague, Colin Powell, to his very important and impressive speech about the Middle East peace process yesterday.

I think this is a very important initiative, and we are ready to cooperate and give any support as the Federal Republic of Germany, as Europe, to go ahead with the peace process. The situation in the Middle East is very complicated, but I think the United States is in the driver's seat.

First, the speech of the President in the General Assembly, I think, was also very, very important, and now the speech of Colin Powell. And we are very happy about the positive response of Arab leaders and of the Israeli Prime Minister.

Secondly, we were talking about Afghanistan, and we are looking forward now for the meeting of the UN with Afghan leaders to form a transitional government. We will very closely cooperate here with the UN, and I think it's very important to push forward now and speed up this political process. And we are, of course, in close cooperation with all of our allies, especially with the United States and the United Nations, with the international aid community, to push forward very important international aid for the Afghan people. Humanitarian aid is very important.

We talked also about the summit between the two presidents of the United States and Russia, and the relations between the

West and NATO and Russia. So it was all in all a very fruitful and successful discussion.

Thank you very much.

**QUESTION:** Minister Fischer, you said Germany will cooperate very closely. There is a report that you will host that meeting. Can you confirm that Germany is the site for the parties, the multi-party meeting?

**FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER:** Yes, I can confirm that. Before the meeting with Colin, I had a phone call with Mr. Brahimi, and he informed me about the decision of the UN to have this meeting in Berlin, and we are very happy about that.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Powell, what do you think of the Israeli Government's decision to build permanent housing in Hebron after your call for an end to settlements yesterday?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Well, we have always had a position that these settlements are a disturbing and destabilizing factor in our pursuit for a solution to the Middle East crisis. And the position I stated yesterday was a reaffirmation of the United States' position, and I hope, in due course, as we get into the Mitchell Committee Report, the two sides will deal with this issue once and for all.

You will recall that the Mitchell Committee Report requires the end of all settlement activity. Both sides have signed up to that report, and it is one of the confidence-building measures they will have to deal with once we get into the cease-fire and then out of the cease-fire and into the Mitchell Report, which will be the continuation, of course, of a state of non-belligerency.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, can you tell us what the US position is on seven days of quiet before confidence-building measures would be implemented?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** My only concern right now is to get the meetings going between the two committees, with General Zinny's assistance, and that will happen, and the two sides can then discuss the conditions and circumstances on which they move forward. So I don't really have to talk at this point to the seven-day issue.

**QUESTION:** Secretary Powell, this morning you mentioned in the opening of the reconstruction conference -- you mentioned setting up a steering committee and then an implementation committee. Why should people not look at this as just more committees being set up? What's actually going to come out of this meeting this morning?

And for Foreign Minister Fischer, what specifically does the German Government plan to do in terms of reconstruction, and also in terms of your hosting of this meeting next week?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** We thought it was important to get started on the reconstruction effort, and so we brought representatives of ministries from around the world to Washington to form a steering group to start to make plans with respect to what's going to be needed. It's not just another committee. Committees are how you bring people together, and then you pass the hat.

And you can be sure that this is a beginning of a process. There will be other meetings. The Japanese will be hosting meetings, and as we go down this process to more senior-level meetings, we will get concrete contributions in terms of money and other resources that will be needed by the Afghan people to rebuild their society.

**FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER:** To answer your question, first of all, reconstruction is not an easy thing. It must be well organized. It's not only the declaration of a political will to reconstruct the country. We made the experience in the Balkans that it must be well organized. And by the way, now, we had the election in Kosovo, a very successful outcome. We had the change of the constitution in Macedonia, a very successful outcome. We had successes in the reconstruction.

So I think Balkans is a very good example that things must be well organized, and Germany is fully committed to that on the international level, but also on the bilateral level. The Chancellor announced that we are ready for a substantial contribution, and a sustainable contribution, not only in the short-term perspective. And I think this is our responsibility as an anti-terror coalition, that we are really in -- will help in a sustainable way the Afghan people.

And the second question is very easy. We are glad and honored to be the host for this meeting. And what we can do, we will contribute, but not here by public announcement, but with the close cooperation with Mr. Brahimi and the Afghan guests.

**SECRETARY POWELL:** Thank you.

(The Secretary walked the Foreign Minister to his car.)

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, is the amount of the reward for Usama bin Laden now at 25 million?

**SECRETARY POWELL:** As you know, the Congress has authorized an award program to capture Usama bin Laden and his associates, and the authority for that program is vested in the Department of State and the Secretary of State. And I have the authority, which I will use, to authorize an award of up to \$25 million for the capture of Usama bin Laden. And the legal paperwork is being accomplished, but that will be our position.

Thank you.

**QUESTION:** Thank you, sir.

11:20 A.M. EST

[End]

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