SECRETARY POWELL: Well, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We're coming to the end of our trip here in Russia, so I thought it might be useful to take a few moments and summarize the last couple of days and answer any questions you might have.

The President is very pleased with the trip, as you might well imagine, and we all are. We think it's been quite successful, as highlighted yesterday morning by a signing of the two documents -- the Treaty of Moscow, as we now call it, as well as the political declaration and other statements that went along with the treaty that the President and President Putin also signed.

I think I might say a word about the Treaty of Moscow, the strategic offensive reduction treaty. And let me say a word about the treaty by taking you back to the 1st of May of last year, when at the National Defense University, President Bush gave a vision of where he wanted to go with respect to a strategic framework with Russia; where he wanted to go with respect to missile defense and with respect to the ABM Treaty and what we had to do about the ABM Treaty to move into a new future strategic relationship with Russia.

The President has acted on every one of the elements of that speech at the National Defense University, in a way that did not cause a disruption in our relationship -- we moved beyond the ABM Treaty. At the time we did that, we had also announced our intention to reduce our strategic offensive arsenal down to 1,700 to 2,200 deployed warheads. And President Putin, when responding to our notification that we were leaving the treaty, made a similar statement with respect to the reduction that he would be undertaking. So, rather than leaving the ABM Treaty and causing an arms race, did quite the opposite.

And then after a period of intense discussion and negotiation, we came up with the treaty that was signed yesterday, which moves operationally deployed warheads down from their levels of roughly 5,000 to 6,000 now, down to 1,700 to 2,200. We believe, and I think I can speak for the Russian side, as well, because they said as much -- believe that this is an historic achievement.

There has been some commentary as to, well, it doesn't deal with the actual warheads once their in storage, it deals with the warheads on their launchers. I might point out that all previous arms control treaties were of the same type -- they didn't deal with the stockpile elimination, they dealt with either launchers or systems. And so this is consistent with those previous treaties -- SALT I, SALT II, START I, START II and the INF treaty.

The important point is that warheads are coming off of launchers. And if you were interested in reducing the number of warheads in the world on both sides and destroying these warheads, you start with taking them off a launcher. And once you have them into your stockpile, then you can make judgments as to whether you retain some as operational spares, or whether you use some to modernize systems, or whether you destroy them.

I think both sides have it in their interests to destroy as many as possible. Both sides are also limited as to how many they can destroy in any given year because it is a very technical process. We are limited to how many we can do; so are they, just by the nature of our nuclear infrastructure.

We are interested in helping the Russians not only to get rid of their excess stockpile warheads, but also their no longer necessary chemical weapons stockpiles and whatever other chemical, biological or radiological stockpiles...
they may have. And that's why we put close to a billion dollars a year into these cooperative programs with the Russians, and will continue to maintain that level of investment. It is also why we are looking at new creative ways of finding the means by which Russia can accelerate the elimination of these kinds of stockpiles.

So I think it is an historic treaty which serves the interest of both nations, both peoples, and makes it a safer world, as we reduce the number of launchers that are sitting there with warheads on them, and as we then turn our attention to how do we get rid of those weapons in stockpiles that are really not necessary, they're excess to anyone else's needs. And over time, I think you will see that happen. Nothing in this treaty keeps anybody from destroying warheads that they no longer need which are in stockpiles.

But the activities of the last two days went beyond just the strategic treaty and the strategic framework. It went into laying out new ways that we can cooperate economically, new opportunities for cooperation in energy, the advocacy of multiple pipelines to bring out oil from this part of the world to where it is needed, the discussion of accession to the World Trading Organization on the part of Russia -- the United States supports this, and we'll be doing everything possible to prepare Russia for accession into the World Trading Organization. Our continued efforts to remove the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which is a vestige of the 1970s, and you've heard the President speak to this. And we are also hopeful that, within the next couple of weeks, Secretary Evans will be making a determination on designating Russia whether or not he will designate it as a market economy. That is in his authority; it's a regulatory action.

We also met yesterday -- the President met with a number of business leaders, both Russian and American business leaders, to explore what additional opportunities that exist in Russia for investment. And I think as you read through the statement, you also saw there was a commitment to increase the level of our people-to-people exchanges, because as you have heard President Bush say many, many times, we are anxious to show the Russian people that we are their friends, and we are going to be their partners. And I think that this fifth meeting between the two Presidents builds on the foundation that was established in Slovenia over a year ago. And the President is quite pleased with everything that has transpired, as well as the deepening of the personal relationship between President Putin and President Bush.

And so with those few introductory remarks, let me move on from Russia, just to say that we're looking forward to discussions with the French leaders tomorrow, and President Chirac. And then we will also have an opportunity to meet with Mr. Berlusconi in Rome. And that all leads up to Tuesday, when we will again be with President Putin and the other leaders of NATO to sign another historic document. This will be setting up the NATO-Russia Council, which will have important work to do on areas of mutual interest.

So it's been a successful trip so far, and we look to another -- look forward to another several successful days.

Questions. Ron?

Q Yes, sir. The President today urged President Musharraf to keep his promises and stop the insurgency. And President Putin announced his conference -- that he's going to have one-on-one sideline meetings, and also said that the missile tests by Pakistan are not helpful, are aggravating the situation.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes.

Q When will -- what is the United States' position on the missile test? Do you agree that they're aggravating the situation, and will we have any role in the sideline discussions?

SECRETARY POWLL: Let me start from the beginning, of course. We do expect President Musharraf to stick with the commitments that he has publicly made. He began making them very publicly in his January 12th speech, to stop cross-border activity. That is very destabilizing and is a source of tension and has contributed to the situation we find ourselves in.

I spoke to President Musharraf twice the day before yesterday, and I spoke to Foreign Minister Singh of India yesterday, to keep the dialogue going. I'm pleased that my European Union colleague, Chris Patton, is in the region now; and Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, will be going in early next week; and then Deputy Secretary Armitage is planning a trip toward the end of next week, the beginning of the following week. So we're going to stay very actively engaged in trying to find a solution to this very, very difficult situation.
Anytime you have two armies that close to one another and this level of tension, there is the likelihood of an outbreak of hostilities; and when both are nuclear armed, that should cause us all concern. And this is a time for both sides to reflect on the actions that they taken, reflect on the current situation, and let the international community help them in finding a political way to resolve the situation.

The conference -- the conference in Almati that was referenced by President Putin. I don't think he was so much announcing it as he was acknowledging what many of you may not have known, that such a conference is scheduled for early June. And it's a conference that was called by President Nazarbayev some time ago. It's not a conference that's suddenly being called. And a number of regional leaders are coming to the conference. And two of the regional leaders who have been invited are President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee.

I don't know if they are going. As President Putin indicated, they have been invited. But should they attend, that would open up opportunities for political dialogue, not necessarily with each other, but with other leaders who will be there. President Putin will be attending that conference. We won't be at that conference, because it is a regional grouping that we are not a part of.

With respect to the missile tests by the Pakistanis, as we said at the Department yesterday, we are disappointed. The tests were announced publicly and the Pakistanis did notify the Indians that they were routine tests, and the Indians received them in that manner, and described them in a way they chose to describe them. I'll let them describe it. But I don't think it was a particularly useful thing to do right now, even though I don't think it causes us to get any closer to a conflict. But I don't think it was a terribly useful thing to do right now. And, as the Department noted yesterday, we were disappointed that the Pakistanis took this time to perform routine tests which, if they were routine, could have been performed at some other time.

Q Why do you think President Musharraf has been unable to follow through on his pledge, his January 12th pledge?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I can't speak for President Musharraf. I do know that we have spoken to him on a number of occasions and he has assured us that he is taking action. But we do not believe that that action is yet complete or has totally satisfied the statement that he made earlier, that all activity would be stopped. So we will continue to encourage him to do it in such a way and to give instructions and orders in such a way that there can be no mistaking his intention and his actual actions, and that his deeds and the deeds of the Pakistani forces will match the words of their President.

Q Mr. Secretary, what do you expect on your visit to France --

SECRETARY POWELL: I beg your pardon?

Q What do you expect, Mr. Secretary, from your visit in France tomorrow, and after tomorrow, with President Chirac and in Normandy?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, Normandy -- let me start with Normandy. Normandy will be an opportunity to remember the brave soldiers who lost their lives in that invasion in 1944, on the 6th of June. And it's always a moving ceremony for Americans, and for the French, as well. And it will give us an opportunity to reflect on the strength of our relationship with France and with the French people. We have been through many things together over the last 220-odd years. And we shared an experience in World War II, which will be commemorated on the Normandy beaches once again.

And it also gives an opportunity for President Bush to exchange views with Mr. Chirac on a number of issues. And I think they'll be discussing the Middle East. I'm sure they'll be discussing the future of NATO and other issues of interest to Europe and to the bilateral relationship between our two sides.

There are very few outstanding issues between France and the United States bilaterally. There are occasional disagreements and areas of discussion in multilateral or regional forum. And I've already had the opportunity to meet with my new French colleague once, and I look forward to seeing him again on -- tomorrow.

Q Sir, building up on this, will the new Russian role in NATO be close to what the French role used to be? And in
general, how will the new Russia-NATO Council help define the future evolution of the alliance?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't think it can compare to the French role, because France was always a member of the political alliance -- if not always -- not part of the integrated military component of that alliance. Russia's role with NATO is new and unique, and that's why it is being given this prominence. And the fact that all of the leaders elected to come together in Rome on Tuesday to sign this gives it added impetus -- emphasis -- added emphasis.

The test of it all, though, is what will we do in this NATO-Russia Council? And several areas of cooperation have already been spelled out in rather specific terms: To look at threat assessments in the area of terrorism; to examine how we can do search and rescue activities together; what kind of air control plans we might look at that could be integrated with respect to control of air space. And there were several other areas. And I look forward to exploring with my Russian colleagues and my other NATO colleagues other areas where it makes sense for us to operate "at-20," all the way from North America, across Western Europe, old Eastern Europe and into Russia.

And so this new arrangement as opposed to, say, the arrangement that existed since 1997, I think will have greater specificity to it and more energy in it. And we look forward this fall to showing the results of our initial efforts.

Q What do you expect from the Ukrainian effort to join NATO?

SECRETARY POWELL: Ukraine has recently expressed an interest in joining NATO at some point in the future. And, of course, we are anxious to hear more about Ukraine's efforts to prepare themselves. I think they're -- we're quite a distance away from starting Ukraine on the formal process toward membership.

Q If we can get back to India and Pakistan for a moment. In January there were tensions, of course. In hindsight, many people believe the two countries came very close to war, that it was a very critical moment. Is it your assessment that we're at that level of tension and danger now? Can you put it in some sort of comparative context for us?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't know that I could give you a direct comparison. I can tell yo that I'm as concerned now as I was then. And we devoted a lot of time and energy to it then, and we're doing it now. We have been trying to find a way to bridge the differences between the two sides. There was an idea to exchange lists of individuals -- that didn't quite work out.

The key thing that we're looking for now is to shut down the action across the Line of Control, and hopefully that will give us a basis for seeing de-escalation on the part of the Indians. And from that point on -- if we can get to that point, that first set of steps, then I think there will be opportunities for many other things to happen after that. And we are poised diplomatically to encourage other steps beyond that. But that is the first step that we have to reach, or else it gets -- it's difficult to go beyond, of course.

Q Secretary Powell, on yesterday's meetings with President Putin, can you be a little more specific about what kind of commitments he made in relation to the exports to Iran? And also what your assessment is, now that you've had a chance to talk with him, about how much loose nuclear material remains unsecured in Russia, the degree to which that is an existing concern. We know you set up a commission, so there has to be some concern. But we don't really have a quantitative sense of what you think is out there.

SECRETARY POWELL: With respect to Iran, I would answer the question this way. Both nations are agreed that we don't want to contribute to proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, and that includes nuclear weapons technology to Iran. Both nations are committed to the proposition that this would not be a good thing for any one of them to be involved in.

There is a disagreement between we and the Russians about the nature of some of their activities. It's a disagreement that's gone on for some time. We believe that some of the activities they are participating in can be seen as helping Iran in the direction of proliferation. They disagree with our assessment. They say that they are as sensitive to this issue as we are, they are closer to Iran than we are and, therefore, that's why they are more sensitive, and that their activities do not assist Iran in that direction.
We disagree with that, and the groups that have been set up, plus our continuing bilateral dialogue that’s been going on for quite a while will continue to explore this. There are some areas that I look forward to taking up with Foreign Minister Ivanov to see if he can assure me, or I can convince him who has the right side of this argument. The good news is that we’ve had candid discussions about this, and I hope we’ll be able to solve this going forward, just as we have solved some of the other difficult issues that we have faced over the past year.

With respect to fissile material, I can’t tell you how much is unaccounted for, if any. I just don’t have that data. That’s why we’re working with them, and we’re investing in our comprehensive threat reduction efforts. And we want to have a broader dialogue with them, to get a better understanding of what they have done over the years, what they have produced over the years, how can we be more effective in capturing that material, recycling it to be used as fuel, or for other purposes, or getting it under solid accountability, so that the whole world can be more comfortable with the knowledge that it is under solid accountability.

Q Have they been reluctant to give you that data?

SECRETARY POWELL: We have not gotten all the intimation on not just that type of technology, but other technology -- chemical activities, biological activities that they’ve had ongoing over the years. And the group that has been set up consisting of the four ministers -- the two Ivanovs, Rumsfeld and Powell, these are some of the areas we’ll be exploring with them.

Q Secretary Powell, from what we’ve seen on this trip so far, the reception has been much warmer than in a traditional -- here in Russia versus in Europe. Can you talk a little bit about the differences in the public perception that we see in the two places, and also if there’s any --

SECRETARY POWELL: Much warmer in Russia than in Western Europe?

Q Well, on the streets. I don’t know, you’re in a bubble, but certainly -- (laughter.)

SECRETARY POWELL: My bubble isn’t as big as the President’s bubble. (Laughter.)

Q -- any color, any anecdotes from the meetings that we haven’t been privy to?

SECRETARY POWELL: There is -- with respect to the two Presidents, obviously, you can see it. I don’t need to give you too much tick-tock. There is a great deal of respect and personal affection. And it now includes the family members. All family members have now met one another. And a very moving evening last night at President Putin’s home, we were all privileged -- some of us were privileged to be a part of.

So I think the respect between the two leaders, the understanding of each other’s position, the understanding of the needs of each other, give us a more solid foundation upon which to build and to move forward. And President Bush spoke to that earlier.

With each one of these meetings, and with the meetings that I have with Igor Ivanov or Don has with Sergei Ivanov, or Condi has with her counterparts, we get to understand their positions better, they get to understand where we’re coming from better. We get the better understanding that they have a public opinion, just as we have a public opinion. They have news media and a Duma that’s on them, just as we have a news media that is never on us, but a Congress that occasionally is. (Laughter.)

And so mutual understanding is increased. And my experience in this work for many, many years is that when you have that level of respect, understanding and friendship, you can get a lot of things done that you can’t get done, unless you have built those relationships and put them in place.

We have those same relationships with our friends in Europe. You saw it with Chancellor Schroeder the other day; you will see it, I’m quite sure, with President Chirac; and I know you’ll see it, for sure, with Mr. Berlusconi -- Prime Minister Berlusconi -- and with the other NATO leaders. But does that mean that there is no opportunity for disagreement or no opportunity for protest of certain policies of the United States government? Of course there will be protest; of course there will be demonstrations. As President Bush said, that’s what makes them democracies. And that’s why we treasure democracy as a form of government.
But I must say we're pleased by the reception that the President and all of us received in Moscow and, especially here in St. Petersburg, where it also coincided with the birthday of the city, which made it an even warmer atmosphere with a gorgeous day in an absolutely beautiful city.

Enough? One more.

Q Mr. Secretary, can you tell us in the context of the nonproliferation efforts, give us your assessment of how concerned you are with level of danger presented by the tactical nuclear weapons that remain in Russia?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes. This is an area we will have to pursue in the future. Secretary Rumsfeld makes a particular point of it every time we're together. This agreement yesterday dealt with strategic weapons, but both sides have tactical nuclear weapons. We have much fewer than they do. We made a more deliberate effort to get rid of them back in 1991 when, frankly, I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and we did it. And they have a larger inventory.

They are short- and medium-range weapons that don't present the same kind of threat to us as the strategic systems do. But nevertheless, they're nuclear weapons. And we believe that, as we move forward, we should discuss these weapons, discuss inventory levels. Have you met the unilateral commitments you made 10 years ago to get rid of these? Because at that time, President Gorbachev, I think it was, made the same commitment that President Bush 41 did to get rid of these kinds of systems or bring them down to a much, much lower level. We still have a few or some -- we still have some. They have many more.

And so we do want to explore with them theater nuclear weapons, as to how we can get a better handle on this kind of weapons system, and we'll be discussing that with them as we move forward.

Q Can I just follow up quickly? President Putin mentioned earlier today that there had been quite a bit of discussion about cooperation on missile technology. Is there any discussion related to ballistic missile defense systems and cooperation with Russia's technology?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yes. And if you'll look in the joint statements we put out, you'll see a reference to our willingness to discuss with the Russians cooperative efforts in missile defense. They have technology, we have technology. We have ideas, they have ideas. So we're looking forward to pursuing that, as has been U.S. policy for many years, ever since President Reagan first put it out there, a different kind of missile defense, when he was talking about the Strategic Defense Initiative. But we've always been willing to make this defensive technology available to others and cooperate with others, within reasons of -- within reason and with respect to certain classification issues, of course.

But, for the most part, try to be as forthcoming as we can with our plans, with what we're planning to do. Share it with the Russians, tell them, show them, so they don't see it as a threat to them, but they do see missile defense as something they may want to be involved in as a way of protecting them from the kinds of threats that will come from these irresponsible states that keep moving in this direction. And that's what our missile defense programs are all about.

Thank you.

Q Mr. Secretary, can you talk about Russia's role as an ally in the war against terrorism, and how that has changed the dynamic of the relationship?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, after 9/11, President Putin gave a very powerful statement that aligned Russia fully with the campaign against terrorism. And he has acted on his -- the commitments he made that day. And they have become a strong partner in the campaign against terrorism. They have supported our efforts in Afghanistan, as the President noted yesterday. They have been very forthcoming in a number of other areas.

And we have been operating in Central Asia in close coordination and cooperation with the Russians in a way that would have been unthinkable just a year, year and a half ago. And so we are very pleased with the support we have gotten and we also want to operate in Central Asia in a way that is mindful of their interest in the region,
as well.

Thank you.

END 5:25 P.M. (Local)

Return to this article at: