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AGENCY: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**PRESS BRIEFING ON THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO EUROPE
with Secretary of State Colin Powell**

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The excerpt reads:

Q Mr. Secretary, this is the President's first trip to Europe since you said that you'd have a word with some of your European allies about their concerns over U.S. policy in Europe. What's the administration learned during this trip of the state of those concerns?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we've learned a lot on this trip. We've learned that the President has very solid relations with all the countries we visited, and I think for that matter, with all the countries we didn't visit, but who are represented here today.

That does not mean that there are not disagreements. There are disagreements over such issues as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court; and there have been other disagreements, as well. But I think we have been very, very forthcoming in our efforts to discuss with our friends in Europe, either in the NATO setting or in the European Union setting, what our positions are, why we feel the way we do about some of these very controversial issues.

With respect to the ICC, for example, everybody has known for years that the United States had problems with the International Criminal Court, and even if it was signed, it would probably not be sent for ratification. And President Clinton made that clear when he signed it.

And so I don't think one should view an issue like that as an example of the United States essentially turning its back on its friends in Europe. Quite the contrary. We listened, we heard, we explained back to our European friends why we could not move in that direction to go along with them on the ICC. And so where we believe that we have a principle we must hold dear to, and as long as we are in discussions with our European friends, that should not be viewed as unilateralism or just going our way; we have a disagreement. And just because we are part of a great alliance and we are part of the Euro-Atlantic community does not mean that every issue we can join the consensus on.

If one looks at what we did with the Treaty of Moscow, the strategic reductions that we entered into the other day with Moscow, and go back a year or so when everybody said the United States was going off on its own and if we abandoned the ABM treaty, we were going to start an arms race, we took 10 months to discuss that issue with the Russians, discuss that issue with our European friends. We made the case, some people agreed with the case, some people did not. But it

wasn't a case of the United States not sharing, not talking, not listening. And we listened, and tried to convince everybody that the ABM treaty was an anachronism and it would not destroy strategic stability.

And as a result, we left the ABM treaty. It will become formal next month, the leaving of it, but we announced it in December. And at that same day that we announced it, Mr. Putin said he would cut his strategic forces. So rather than causing an arms race, it's going the other way. I see no indication that the Chinese are going to break out in an arms race because we've left the ABM treaty.

And so where we have a principle position, what we will do is explain that principle position to our friends, try to see if we can find compromises, so we can join consensus. But where we can't join consensus, because of our own beliefs, or because we believe a particular issue and the direction it's going with others does not serve the purpose intended by that action, the United States will stick to its principle position.

And I think we go home from Europe with everybody having a better understanding of this way that we will do business: consult, talk, meet. I spent a lot of time with my European colleagues -- Don Rumsfeld does the same thing, Dr. Rice does the same thing. We'll continue to do that.

But we'll also continue to stick with those positions that we believe are the right positions and the principles positions. And the President is that kind of a leader. And he speaks clearly, he speaks directly, and he makes sure people knows what he believes in. And then he tries to persuade others why that is the correct position. When it does not work, then we will take the position we believe is correct. Where it does work, and we can join consensus with the rest of our friends and allies, that's what we'd like to do. And I think we come home with a better understanding of that, and I hope the Europeans are left with a better understanding of the way in which we want to do business.

Thank you.