

Interview with General Colin L. Powell
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Goldberg: This is an oral history interview with General Colin L. Powell, taking place in Alexandria, Virginia on August 26, 1999. Interviewers from the OSD Historical Office are Alfred Goldberg and Stuart Rochester.

General Powell, we concluded our last interview with the discussion of your service with the NSC and how that may have affected your perspective on national security problems and the role of the Department of Defense. I would like to go on from there to talk about some of the major issues that you had to deal with as chairman, in particular with reference to Secretaries Cheney and Aspin. Did you have any major issues in which you didn't go along with the secretary of defense?

Powell: I'm sure there were disagreements with both secretaries. If there were no disagreements, they would not need a chairman. But in most cases, they were tactical differences of opinion. I had no major policy, strategic or operational disagreements with Secretary Cheney that I can recall. The one that I remember that I touched on in my memoirs--amusing in retrospect, but not at the time--was that I was anxious to get Army artillery-fired nuclear projectiles out of the force structure before Secretary Cheney or his civilian staff was willing to do so. The Joint Staff had done a study that said we really don't need these things. They are short-range, limited utility, [REDACTED]. So all of these modernized weapons [REDACTED], but we were spending a lot of money to

produce and put in the field a weapon that didn't seem to make a lot of sense. Everybody was against me on the issue--the policy staff, the CINCS, all of the chiefs--smiles on their faces, smiling all the time, came in lock-step and were against me, with the exception of the vice chairman who at that time was not a member of the chiefs. The Army was determined to keep these weapons, so when I was not watching, the chief of staff of the Army very effectively marshaled his forces and got all of the other chiefs to support him. So the issue went to the secretary with all of these non-concurrences--everybody not concurring with my recommendations. Secretary Cheney and I were on a plane going to the Gulf when he said, "What is this thing?" It was about two inches thick by now with red scribbles all over it from everybody. I said, "It's a tough one for you--all of your civilian staff thinks that I'm wrong in this and I hope you will think that I'm right. But because of the opposition, I'll understand if you vote against me--it'll be back." And so he decided not to do what I recommended. It was amusing in retrospect; a year later they all got wiped out in a heartbeat as part of President Bush's late 1992 decision to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons except for Air Force systems.

Goldberg: How big an element was it in the Army?

Powell: It was big, especially within the artillery community. The Army consisted of its communities just as every service does. And the artillery community was in full flight on this one, and the chief of staff of the Army, Carl Vuono, was an artillery officer. I'm not suggesting that it was a totally parochial decision on his part, but he certainly was inclined to preserve the full range of artillery capability. It was an institutional position--strongly held--not just a chief's view. And there was a strongly

held view about it in the retired community as well. To this day, Fritz Krossen keeps writing articles for Army Magazine, bemoaning the fact that we have gotten rid of nuclear artillery and we ought to bring it back.

Goldberg: I think all the way back to the 50's and the Honest Johns.

Powell: The Davy Crocketts--every young lieutenant's nightmare.

Goldberg: [REDACTED]

Powell: But that was an example. When Secretary Cheney and I disagreed on something, for the most part we did it privately. He and I would talk our way through it. Most of the other disagreements had to do with positions on arms control negotiations with the Soviets. I tended to be more willing and liberal than Secretary Cheney was in terms of giving up weapon systems to get an agreement that would cause the Soviets to give up weapon systems. I think he probably represented the more conservative wing of defense thinking than I did. I was more middle of the road to slightly left.

Goldberg: Most of his pronouncements at the time indicated his position.

Powell: I was an arms control fan, and I still am. And for those who found that to be a terrible thing to be, I was in good company with President Ronald Reagan, who was an arms control fan. He defended our interest, but it was under his watch that we got the INF Treaty. A lot of critics suggested that it was a terrible thing to do to disarm ourselves. But in fact, we got rid of a whole class of nuclear weapons and gave the Soviets--Gorbachev--an opportunity to say, "We got rid of these--see how

the West will deal with us in a more reasonable way.” I was a great believer in the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Reduction Treaty, which reduced the size of the conventional forces. And I was a great supporter of START negotiations and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the other arms control agreements--more so than Secretary Cheney. I tended to line up more with Secretary Baker in those days than Cheney.

Goldberg: In which areas did you find it easiest and which most difficult to exercise significant influence as chairman?

Powell: Secretary Cheney and I were pretty consistent in our thinking--if you are going into war, do it decisively, do it quickly, make sure you have a clear objective. In fact, I am the one tagged with the Powell doctrine, but the Cheney doctrine was even more rigid than the Powell doctrine. It was Dick Cheney who added the fourth point about making sure that you have an exit strategy and that there is a cost-effective basis for it. You won't find that in anything that I have written. For the most part, Cheney and I thought alike with respect to the importance of taking care of our troops, in terms of readiness requirements, and the level of the budget that we needed. We had a long period of debate--not a disagreement--from 1989 to 1991 on the base force and how to get down to that new level. He didn't buy into it initially. We had a long period of debate involving Paul Wolfowitz, others and me until finally we agreed on the base force [that something], with all of its warts. Frankly, it's still the force. It has a lot of different names, but it's the same premise. So for the most part, we were in bed together on almost all of the issues. If there was one area where I had less influence, it was in the area of procurement and deciding what

weapon systems we really needed or didn't need. Even though there was a JROC and a Defense Resources Board process that I participated in, and the vice chairman served as my principal agent, I didn't have that kind of influence. Those decisions were essentially made between the individual chiefs and their secretaries and the secretary of defense. So I was sort of on the margin. I wasn't in the chain on those decisions. I could say, "we don't need that or we don't need this," but I was speaking almost as a friend of the court rather than a principal military adviser.

Goldberg: The services were very intense in pursuing their interests.

Powell: Yes, which is what you would expect. In subsequent years, the chairman and the office of the chairman have gotten more heavily involved, with Admiral Jeremiah after I left for a while and then especially with Admiral Owens and his reinvigoration of the JROC process. I have no idea what it's like now. The services still seem to get what they want. They just keep chugging along.

Goldberg: How about the CINCs and their influence in procurement matters?

Powell: The CINCs had little influence in procurement matters.

Goldberg: Weapon systems?

Powell: No. They, for the most part, would represent the chiefs' interests. The CINCs were always thinking in real time--fighting war today. If a service chief wanted a certain airplane, the CINC wasn't going to say, "You don't need that airplane, you need this." That really was not the role of a CINC and I seldom saw a CINC do that. They would come in with their own priority list of capabilities and weapons they would like to see, and almost invariably you could be sure that whatever a service wanted was on that CINC's list somewhere--high enough for the

service to say, "The CINC wants this." In fact, more often than not, especially if the CINC was of the same service as the chief, there was almost an expectation that that CINC would support a chief's procurement. Thus, going back to nuclear-fired artillery, SACEUR, who at the time was an Army officer, strongly supported nuclear artillery when I was trying to get rid of it. But a year later, the same CINC was willing to see it all go when it was no longer necessary to protect that position.

Goldberg: So, your observation would be that, in fact, the chiefs of staff have retained a great deal of power and influence in spite of Goldwater-Nichols or anything else that's come along?

Powell: In procurement certainly and in acquisition, yes. I have never felt that they have lost as much influence as is claimed by the original long-standing genetically predisposed critics of Goldwater-Nichols, because before Goldwater-Nichols the chairman was going around them anyway--he had to in order to be helpful to the secretary. Goldwater-Nichols made it explicit. And because it was explicit, I have always held that the chiefs under Goldwater-Nichols had more influence as a group than they did before Goldwater-Nichols.

Goldberg: That's interesting. You are right about the chairman going around the other chiefs or anybody else for that matter to the secretary or the president. That goes back to Radford in the 1950s.

Powell: They had to, and they created a structure to let it happen. That was the assistant to the chairman with a little staff that could be separated from the corporate staff.

Goldberg: I made that point in a study we put out on DoD organization.

Powell: I eliminated that little staff. It kept growing back and I kept eliminating it.

Goldberg: You have mentioned Aspin before, but in this particular connection do you have anything to say?

Powell: Surprisingly, my differences with Secretary Aspin weren't so much on policy issues as on style--on the personal characteristics he brought to the office. I think it took Les some time to realize that he was deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces, even though he had watched the system a couple dozen years from the Hill. He now had a line responsibility, and you have to look like a line leader, act like a line leader, and develop habits of a line leader. And sort of divorce yourself from the congressional way of doing business. I think Les was not only slow doing that--over time, he realized what he had to do, but it was complicated by health problems, which eventually killed him. I think it was accentuated by being in a new administration where there was no military ethic. The president immediately stopped having honor ceremonies for visiting foreigners--no more troops lining up on the South Lawn. It took the White House a while to realize that foreign visitors expect that--it's part of the reason why you come to America, so you can get file footage for your television stations back home showing you being paraded by the armed forces. Now they do it better than any administration I've worked with. But in those first few months--zip. It took them all a while to learn that commander-in-chief and the deputy-commander-in-chief means "you are the commander-in-chief and the deputy-commander-in-chief." The big issue that dominated my first several months--my whole nine months with the Clinton Administration was, "don't ask, don't tell on gays and lesbians in the military." As it turned out, I didn't have a

disagreement with Secretary Aspin, because he never told me what he thought personally. I have no recollection of him ever saying, "We ought to do it or we ought not do it--it's right or it's wrong, or this or that." What he did from the very first day, in fact before they took office, was to precipitate the crisis the president found himself in by pointing out the political problems associated with such a decision on the part of the president. There was a famous appearance that he made on a talk show a few days before the administration began where he started backing away from the points the president had made. Les, being very, very understanding of the ways of Capitol Hill, knew that if the president did what he was alleged to be getting ready to do, Congress would overturn it in a minute. Les did not think this was the wise thing for the president to start out his administration with, so he started to undercut the president's inclination. By undercut, I mean he started to give the president the running room not to move. He was trying to help the president politically by saying, "Well, you know we've got to look at this," and that helped precipitate the crisis. Les had been warning the president and the administration, and I had warned the president, when he was still governor, in the first meeting we had in November 1992, that it was an issue best left for another time. If you feel you have to say something about it right away, say you're giving it to the Pentagon to study. Then let's deal with other things--get to know the armed forces, travel, see them, create this bond before you face this one. Because it is not just us old generals who are troglodytes on this, as some might suggest to you. It's our chaplains, our wives, our sergeants, parents, and young men and women who we tell where to sleep every night and who they are going to sleep with. It is not a trivial snap-your-finger issue. It

is not just dropping the barrier to this. It is the entire gay and lesbian agenda of domiciles, health care and partner benefits--all of it comes in, and we've got enough going on right now. I think the president was inclined to get that running, but it all tripped. It all got fired up, and I'm afraid that some of his close advisers said, "Take them on--you're the president, take on the chiefs on this one." So it took us six months to find a way for everybody to climb down, but Les Aspin was very helpful during that period. I cannot say that we had a disagreement on that issue. We both were trying to get it behind us. But I never did know what Les' deepest feelings about it were.

Goldberg: Would you say that his real problem was that he didn't have the temperament for the job?

Powell: I would say that it was not so much temperament, but that he didn't have the personality. It was not his style.

Goldberg: Personality is related to temperament very strongly.

Powell: To say the word "temperament" suggests that there is a deficiency in his behavior. I wouldn't say that. It just wasn't his style. His background and his training experience did not bring a style to the Pentagon that the Pentagon knew how to deal with. The Pentagon did not change easily. So Les had to change over time, and it didn't happen quickly enough. He got caught at the end of the year and was forced to resign. The ostensible reason was the Somalia operation. That is an unfair hit on Secretary Aspin. Secretary Aspin was trying to do what he thought was right at that time, and that was not to reinforce but to get out of Somalia. And a tragedy occurred. But if you have a policy that can't stand 18 casualties, you shouldn't have

been there. It wasn't a policy. So he took the hit for what was a policy failure at the highest levels of the administration.

Goldberg: On the subject of the role of the chiefs of the services, I had a discussion on this with General Krulak some time ago and I ventured the notion that the CINCs are now exercising a great deal more influence at the expense of the chiefs and he said, "No that isn't so. When they have a problem they come to the chief of their service first--not to the chairman or the secretary."

Powell: If you need resources, it comes from a service. And if you go to the chairman it means that you are not getting it, and you have to do something nasty to a chief and that's not a good thing to do. So if you need more Army troops, equipment, or something for the Navy, it's more useful to approach the service chief. Invariably the chairman, if he has his fingers in all of the pots he is supposed to and if he has sources of information, is aware of all that. I found that I could usually keep track of what was going on between the CINCs and the service chiefs, because they would usually tell me.

Goldberg: You did a lot better than the secretary did in that respect.

Powell: Which secretary?

Goldberg: Any secretary of defense.

Powell: I would say that no secretary of defense could possibly know what's going on with these 30-year relationships between military officers in an entirely different subterranean system--a world of back channels.

Goldberg: There are a lot of things that they are not being told.

Powell: That's the case with any boss of a large organization. You trust the people running the organization. But Cheney, I think, as much or more so than most secretaries, tried to keep a handle on it. I tried to keep him informed. He had a requirement that whenever a CINC came to town he wanted to see him. This is an old requirement that Weinberger and Carlucci used, and Cheney did it religiously and not just for pro forma purposes. He really wanted to hear from the CINCs when they came to town. And they went in there alone--no chairman. I made a point of not going with them. It wasn't any of my business. That was between Mr. Cheney and his immediate subordinate, but the CINCs would usually advise me of any tough issues that they were taking to the secretary, or if the secretary had given them guidance that was new or different they would certainly make a point of telling me.

Goldberg: Cheney made very good use of his military assistants. He told us that this was one of his chief means of communication with the military--not only communication but to get information. The military assistants kept him informed. He selected them very carefully with that in mind. Usually he took them from the Joint Staff.

Powell: I agree with that wholeheartedly. Having been a military assistant for one secretary and three deputy secretaries, I know a little about the job, and Cheney used them very effectively. Of the three that come to mind, two of them came off my staff--Jumper and Joe Lopez--and Bill Owens I had known for years. The only problem I ever had with an assistant was one day in the buildup to Desert Storm during Desert Shield. Cheney wanted to know something about cruise missiles capability, how many we had and where they were, and he had Admiral Owens go

directly to the Navy. And the Navy immediately notified me. They gave me information and I said, "Oops, this is troublesome." So the CNO immediately called me and said, "Let me tell you what we're telling the secretary." I had a conversation with the secretary about it saying, "Mr. Secretary, you can get information from anybody you want, but by law you also have to get it from me. If random stuff is coming in from the service about weapons capabilities, stockage levels and how you might use these things operationally, I've got to know it and the CINCs have got to know it--Schwarzkopf and I have to know it. You can't have random planning going on somewhere." He thanked me for my support of national security and my input--being who he was he didn't take guff from anybody, especially his chairman. I had a word with Bill Owens in a way that didn't get me into trouble. Bill understood, and everything was fine after that. Cheney continued to get information wherever he wanted it from to make a point, but he made sure that he also got it from me. We had three little hiccups my first month or so working for him, which I talk about in my memoirs, and I'm kind of proud of it because it showed the proper relationship---when the chairman gets out of line, the secretary snaps his garters.

Goldberg: I must say that he only spoke favorably of you.

Powell: Ditto with him. He was a great secretary.

Goldberg: You played a significant role in strategic planning during the time you were chairman. What were the major aspects of that?

Powell: One, recognizing that the Cold War is over. It sounds easy to say, but it's not easy to execute.

Goldberg: Cheney didn't believe it.

Powell: He didn't believe it for a while, and long after he believed it there were people in the bottom of the organization who didn't believe it. They were still chugging away. My favorite story to illustrate this is that one day my J-4 came in and said, "We just saved \$400 million." I said, "How did you do that?" He said, "We found some computer down in Defense Logistics Fuel Supply Center. The major running it was still going against the stockage level of something like 100 million barrels of oil in strategic reserves." Why do you need that much in strategic reserve? When World War III broke out all oil markets would be denied to us. But World War III was not going to break out again. So, we didn't need a stockage level like that. We needed a stockage level that matched regional contingency here or the one there. Oil is a fungible commodity. It will always be available. And by cutting that stockage level to its new post-Cold War concept hundreds of millions of dollars are saved. One is to get everybody to understand that the Cold War is over. Two, if the Cold War is over and we're not fighting that--then come up with a strategic concept. And you have more than enough information on the base force of my greater Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, as I called it. We have interesting responsibilities. The base force, I would say, was another one. There was Desert Storm/Desert Shield and the invasion of Panama, which was a warm-up---a good training exercise for all of those things. Also the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons except for Air Force delivered systems and a lot of work on roles and missions, which was very controversial. Everybody had great one-liners as to what we were supposed to do. Do we really need four air forces--that's a great line. We

don't need four air forces, Senator Nunn and others would keep shooting at me. Nobody would ever tell me which one to get rid of.

Goldberg: Do you know what Calvin Coolidge said in the 1920's?

Powell: No.

Goldberg: We already have an airplane, why do we need more.

Powell: So, roles and missions was a tough one and it troubled me, because when I finished it, I knew it would not meet the expectations of the audience. But so be it, I thought it was the right thing to do. Congress responded by damning it with faint praise and launching a \$20 million dollar study effort on roles and missions, which reached the identical conclusions and changed nothing except, in my humble judgment, to add even more process to the process.

Goldberg: Is that the one that John White headed?

Powell: Yes. There was nothing that came out of that other than more process, and we spent \$20 million dollars employing analysts and think tanks. I called it the welfare-to-work program for the intellectual community. But it didn't change a thing as a practical matter. But that was a tough one. I still think that the mix of roles and missions is about right and no one has deemed to change it. I don't think a chairman has done a roles and missions study since I left even though the law requires one every couple of years. I don't think Shali [General John Shalikashvili] did one. I think he skipped because of the White study. To the best of my knowledge, that's how Shali got out of it. I told him not to do one. There is nothing more to do. I don't know what General Shelton has done or may do, but I think there

is a legal requirement unless it's gone away. They wanted to do it every two years. That was Admiral Crowe's recommendation.

Goldberg: To have a fight every two years?

Powell: Yes, and I fought it like the plague. I recommended every four years--let every chairman do it once. I don't know of another chairman's roles and missions report since I left. I may be wrong. Another thing that I thought was strategic was totally reshaping the process by which we did work and studies. The Joint Staff had a reputation of putting out big thick useless documents that talked about requirements for wars that were beyond the pale of anyone's imagination--we need forty divisions, fifty of these. It was a bureaucratic paper mill.

Goldberg: Traditional.

Powell: Yes, but we broke the tradition because we trimmed that whole process down significantly--not as far as I would have liked--and we just stopped using it for real decisions. The base force was sold on slides.

Goldberg: But had they been using the studies for real decisions before?

Powell: No.

Goldberg: This goes back to the 50's also.

Powell: But I also predict to you that it will grow back over time like mildew unless you scrub it every year. There will always be a need for more paper and more process. Every study group that comes along says it's going to fix up the Pentagon. What it ends up doing is making recommendations for more reviews, more process, more studies and more paper.

Goldberg: How about if we have a paperless society?

Powell: Is that why the North Parking lot is so full after all of these cuts? We have cut the Department enormously and all I have to do is look at the North Parking lot--nothing has been cut.

Goldberg: They have cut out the Mall Parking lot completely and they have cut down on the size of the South Parking. So it may not be as bad as you think.

Powell: I think it is, because all of those things usually are shipped somewhere--they are not eliminated--shipped into Doc Cooke's Washington Headquarters Services, which is bigger than most corps. They have shipped a lot of things out that shouldn't be shipped out--don't make sense to be shipped out--in order to show that something has been reduced.

Goldberg: They haven't really shipped them out. They are just not in the same role. That's an old one.

Powell: They were supposed to have shipped Andy Marshall to NDU--bing! He's back with a better title.

Goldberg: Did they change his title?

Powell: I think they did--check it.

Goldberg: I'll ask him.

Powell: Aspin and I got along well. It was not a happy time. But my times are not supposed to be happy, but it's better when they are than when they are not. But it was not his job to make me happy. I was the last member of the Reagan/Bush years. I was not just a general; I was the deputy and national security adviser. So my fingerprints were on everything that had happened the previous 12 years. And so, it wasn't easy watching a new crowd come in and do things that I didn't always

like. Les was considerate of me--he understood the difficulties this presented. He was very kind, except when we had disagreements about something. It was only once that we had words. The president and the White House staff made a unique effort to be kind and accommodating, because they understood the difficulty of my situation. Frankly, they didn't want me to go off mad. I had a retirement ceremony far beyond anything that I should have had or deserved. It was very pleasant, very nice, but they were trying to be nice, and they were also trying to be politically careful.

Goldberg: You came out a lot better than General Jones did in 1981/2. He had a very rough time of it. The attitude was the opposite of the one you described.

Powell: The president was kind, gave me gifts, and we had long conversations in his office--the kind I never had with Reagan or Bush. Even after the "don't ask, don't tell." I think I said this in my memoirs: "If these problems were easy, somebody else would have solved them. So don't ever be afraid to tell me what you think."

Goldberg: It's sort of normal for administrations to pass problems on to their successors, if they can't handle them.

Powell: The one difference I had with Les was that sometimes he would make pronouncements on issues that were our business that had not been shared with the chairman or the chiefs. At one point, he wanted to try a different strategy called "win, hold." Win in one theater and only hold in the other theater. It's not our national strategy and it reflected a change. He just put it in a speech he gave over at the National Defense University and the whole world saw it as a change, and he was fly-fishing--testing. And it went away in 24 hours. It never received serious attention. If

he was anxious to see if this was a workable strategy, we could have helped him with it. We would do that from time to time. I think he realized over time that it was better to get us into the tent before springing something like this. We were having readiness trouble as always. There was always a readiness problem--one kind or another. So Aspin created a readiness panel with Max Thurman, Julius Becton and a number of others. I think Max was the chairman. He created the panel without any consultation with the chiefs, who had responsibility for this. Of course, the chairman had some responsibility for it. One day I'm watching television and there he is announcing that the panel is going to work. And we did another readiness study. Things like that are better shared with the chiefs and the chairman before they are begun.

Goldberg: On the subject of readiness, which is related obviously to strategic planning, procurement and other things: Did you take a position or was it necessary to take a position when the alternatives existed of putting a priority on readiness or technological advances, new weapons, etc.?

Powell: There are more than just two. It isn't just readiness and technology; it's readiness, technology, personnel, recruitment, retention pay, and military construction.

Goldberg: People often subsume that a lot of those under readiness.

Powell: But they all compete separately, and they are all interlocked. You always have to balance off something, because there is never, under the best of circumstances, all the money you need for everything you want to do. So yes, the chairman would present a view, but the chiefs and the service secretaries were in

the best position to make a judgment about what their services needed. That was what their Title 10 responsibilities were.

Goldberg: That's when you get the competition among them.

Powell: Yes, and there will always be competition.

Goldberg: And interservice problems.

Powell: Everybody thinks they are being shorted.

Goldberg: Did you face any particularly sharp ones during your time?

Powell: Yes, every time we met it was always the Army complaining that it only got 23% of the budget. They had been complaining about that forever. The Air Force was saying that they were being asked to spend too much money for common systems like GPS or MILSTAR. It was affecting their ability to buy airplanes--the things they needed--sometimes forgetting the fact that they were given that money for those systems and not to buy the planes they needed. But the Air Force always had this inclination to use whatever money that had been given to them for whatever purpose they wanted to use it for as opposed to necessarily the purposes for which the money had been given. And the Navy always had its desires. So the job of the secretary of defense is to make the decisions on these issues. And as I have said to many audiences, the job of the secretary of defense is not to allocate resources, but to allocate shortage. Allocating shortage is much more difficult than allocating resources. Who gets the short stick; who doesn't get what they want. That's the tough issue.

Goldberg: It all sounds so familiar.

Powell: It hasn't changed and it won't change. It's the nature of such an organization.

Goldberg: I'm editing a volume on the 1950s--the Eisenhower period--and all of this in the present day is exactly the same thing--the Army getting cut and complaining and the Air Force wanting more; and the Navy--all of this has been apparently characteristic of the whole system since its establishment in 1947.

Powell: I would submit since its establishment in 1789 or whatever. It continues today.

Goldberg: It's been worst some times than others.

Powell: We needed the Navy in the latter part of the 18th century. We didn't need an Army, we didn't have any enemies here. What is the apocryphal story about George Washington defending a proposal for the Army that had never been more than 3,000 or 6,000 by saying, "Yes, I will support that fully as long as the general will guarantee that the enemy will never have more than 3,000 or 6,000." But these are debates in a democracy. The constitution essentially provides for this by saying that the appropriations are only good for a year. That means that everything is up for decision every year.

Goldberg: Well, they are trying to make it two years.

Powell: They have tried for years to make it two years.

Goldberg: Congress likes to have its say every year. You have already expressed some views on the arms control and disarmament matters. Were you involved in decisions in the major weapon systems--things like F-14, B-2, and MX?

Powell: No. I was willing, I was knowledgeable about the decision that was pending but I don't know that I had ever, while chairman, been asked to give a written formal decision on whether we ought to go to one plan or another. I am not even sure if the Joint Staff or the vice chairman did it in the JROC process. That process really was under the control of the under secretary of defense for acquisition with the service acquisition executive and the whole service staff. Now, did I ever late at night, with the secretary of defense in his office, talk about planes and say, "I don't know why we need this plane." Probably. But it was a personal view. I watched a number of tactical air debates take place. We had known for ten years that there were too many planes coming into the acquisition system. Yet, they were all there and nobody ever was able to eliminate any of them. I was present with Secretary Cheney when he killed the A-12, which became one of the most controversial kills in the history of the Defense Department. We may still end up paying a lot of money for it. I didn't recommend that, but I was with him when he decided. In fact, that got me thrown into a federal court trial, because I was present and I scribbled a few notes in my diary--"Cheney killed the A-12." That got me into a year's worth of litigation because I wrote those four words.

Goldberg: It still hasn't been resolved.

Powell: I'll never write another diary. Anybody who keeps notes in the government is crazy. It made it impossible to record your thoughts.

Rochester: How did you regard the Strategic Defense Initiative?

Powell: I was a strong supporter of it in the Reagan days as his national security adviser and saw it in the same way that he did, as a defensive shield against a

Soviet attack. Not as an umbrella that would stop everything, but as a system that if we could get it to work would cause so much doubt and uncertainty in the minds of the Soviet strategic strike planners that they could not be sure that enough would get through. If we could throw 30 or 40 percent uncertainty into that calculation, it was a good thing, even if it never became a full umbrella. Well, the Soviets don't cooperate--they go away, they break up, they go by-by. So I was less of a supporter and champion of it after that. It was competing for resources with other things and I don't think the case had been made that we had that great a threat to worry about. We still had mutual assured destruction as a strategy and we still had deterrence strategy. But I fully supported investment in that technology to see if we could produce something that would be worthwhile. Secretary Cheney was a much more active supporter of it as were Assistant Secretary Hadley and others, including Paul Wolfowitz. I forgot what we called it. We had a transition name for it.

Goldberg: That's been changed now.

Powell: There was a transition name for it. After SDI it became something having to do with . . .

Goldberg: Ballistic missiles?

Powell: No, even before then. It was a strange name that Hadley and company came up with that had to do with surprise and accidental--it was an acronym that captured the essence of the new strategy, which was to guard ourselves against accidental launch.

Goldberg: That was never formally adopted as a name, was it?

Powell: Yes, there was a name. I just can't remember.

Rochester: Maybe it was used more internally than appeared in the press.

Powell: Could be, but it was something that captured the essence of accidental launches and single missile attack and it was a way to keep resources going into this. We had to create a reason for it now that the Soviets were not cooperating. That took on a talmudic raison d'être for our continuing work. And it served that purpose---it worked. It kept funding going to it. Ever since then we have been essentially building up the rogue-accidental launch, irrational person threat, because unless you have an irrational person you can't make the case that a sane person--whether he is Saddam Hussein or Kim Jong Il--would fire one of his two missiles to hit the western tip of Alaska in a way that it was known where it came from. It's an act of suicide.

Goldberg: But you can assume that they are irrational, so it becomes possible.

Powell: But if you assume that any opponent is irrational then you can justify anything. But I don't think that they are irrational. I think we ought to keep investing in the technology and see if it produces something.

Goldberg: So you support the program?

Powell: I support the program, but I don't buy into some of the threat claims that are made. One term that is used repeatedly is "rapid proliferation," and the knowledge and the technology may be proliferating but not the countries. The same countries we worried about 15 years ago are the same countries that we are worrying about today. Not a single country has joined this so-called rapidly proliferating community of countries--not one. In fact, three have dropped out.

Goldberg: What about Pakistan?

Powell: They were there all along.

Goldberg: But not to the extent that they are now.

Powell: Sure they were. They were always there. But it's not a new country.

Goldberg: They had the capability, but they were not exercising it.

Powell: They decided not to exercise it. But I don't know whether I am going to lose sleep in terms of the security of our nation, because Pakistan has it. We always attributed that capability to them and the Indians. Argentina said no, Brazil said no, South Africa said no, and then you have the usual suspects: North Korea--broke and starving, Iraq--pretty much contained, an annoyance, but no serious threat to anybody unless it does develop one of these weapons. As I said to an audience recently, "We should practice not mutual assured destruction, but assured destruction--theirs." Make sure that they understand that--take away the "m"--and Iran, but who else? Anybody in America, no. Anybody in Europe, no. Anybody in Africa, no. Anybody in the Pacific--Chinese modernizing, but that's it. You simply have Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Even Qaddafi is starting to behave.

Goldberg: What about some dispersion from Russia.

Powell: I have heard this for eight years now. But it hasn't happened. I'm glad it hasn't happened, but it has the potential for happening. But to the best of my knowledge, there has been no dispersion. You just don't give somebody a nuclear weapon and say, "Good, now you are a nuclear power." A lot has to go with it. The Russians seem to me, anyway at this point, to have exercised pretty good control over this system, as good as they did during the Cold War. Some of their systems

were controlled better than ours. They had security aboard their subs that had more protections on them than we had aboard our subs.

Goldberg: Of course, they have always been a far more security-conscious country.

Powell: They are a country that lost tens of millions of people. They didn't want a war, but they were ready to fight one.

Goldberg: As chairman, did you have a lot to do with the State Department?

Powell: Yes, I dealt with the State Department constantly. Remember, Goldwater-Nichols made the chairman principal military adviser to the National Security Council, which consisted of the president, the vice president, the secretary of defense and secretary of state. So I viewed as one of my legal responsibilities serving as Jim Baker's military adviser. I did that through the assistant to the chairman position that I started to eliminate two or three times. I think we have talked about that previously--but I kept it, showing the wisdom of ignoring my own advice, and that's how I performed that duty for the secretary of state. It was always done carefully to make sure the secretary of defense was never concerned that I was doing something for the secretary of state that I wasn't doing for him or that there was some back channel stuff going on and I wasn't properly representing his interest. It also worked because I had Jim Baker and Dick Cheney. Weinberger and Shultz might have been different.

Goldberg: Did you meet often with Baker?

Powell: No. Seldom. On occasion. Jim and I were in the Reagan years together. He was secretary of treasury when I was national security adviser. We met occasionally together, but almost always for official business, in the presence of the

secretary, for National Security Council meetings or breakfasts. My assistants met with him alone and traveled with him extensively--Howard Graves (now chancellor of the University of Texas system), John Shalikashvili, and Barry McCaffery.

Goldberg: Admiral Crowe told us that he met on occasion with Secretary Shultz.

Powell: Yes, it drove Weinberger crazy.

Goldberg: Weinberger didn't like it at all, although he kept Weinberger informed.

What about your relationship with Congress?

Powell: Good.

Goldberg: Were you testifying all the time?

Powell: I testified a lot of course, but my relations with Congress were formed during my years as national security adviser where I was constantly up on the Hill defending very controversial issues on behalf of the president--ratification of the INF Treaty, beginning of the CFE talks, Contra aid, lots of tough issues. I got to know all of the principal actors in Congress. I got to know them as a principal. I also had background from my days with Weinberger where I was essentially his bag holder and dog robber. That's where I got to meet these gentlemen and ladies. So, I got to meet them with Weinberger when I went up with him and I essentially learned at the foot of a master, Cap Weinberger, how to deal with those folks, and from Frank Carlucci who was the deputy. Then I became deputy national security adviser--another nine months of internship--and then national security adviser during the presidential election--the reflagging operation of the ships in the Gulf--so I got to know them all. When I became chairman I knew them all. I didn't have to create a relationship. Most chairmen, I would say, usually have to start that process when

they become chairmen. For me it was already a done deal. They were all my buddies and we knew how to fight. It was a situation where, as a military officer, I had fought with members of Congress in the best sense of the word. In other words, a clash of ideas that was never personal. We tried to defeat each other on the basis of our political and bureaucratic skills. It was never personal. I left my White House position with no enemy on the Hill, but a lot of tough fights, especially with the Democrats.

Rochester: Did you ever get personal with Sam Nunn?

Powell: Fighting for Contra aid as national security adviser gave me the greatest exposure to how the congressional process worked. It cemented my relationships with people who were my opponents at the time--never enemies.

Goldberg: You were a strong proponent of Contra aid?

Powell: Oh yes, I was the president's man. I was a negotiator at a time when they wouldn't see the secretary of state's guy, Elliott Abrams. Elliott had been damaged by Iran/Contra and he couldn't go up on the Hill to represent the interest of the government. So it fell to the national security adviser to do it. That's where I got to meet a lot of these folks and we fought like dogs. I had to fight the Democrats on Contra aid. Eventually we didn't win, but at the end of the day we did win when the election was held. We had to fight the Republicans on arms control. I had to argue with Jesse Helms and Dan Quayle and all of them on why the INF treaty was good. So I cut my teeth fighting with both Republicans and Democrats. Sam Nunn and I were friends for a long time--since my days with Weinberger--perhaps even before. We most often agreed on issues, but there were times when we did not. Desert

Storm and the use of force was one--the famous showdown with him in December 1990 when we had decided to double the size of the force and he was very unhappy. We had to testify before Nunn and he was beating us up on that, so that was unpleasant. We were allies on the "don't ask, don't tell policy." We were allies on the base force, even though he wasn't a great fan. He essentially said to me, "I will support you on this for a couple of years, until I see something better. It's a good transition plan." Then we had a big blow-up on my second confirmation. You are familiar with that.

Goldberg: Yes, we discussed that last time.

Powell: At the end of the day, Sam hosted a very nice retirement party for me up on the Hill at the end of my four years. Cohen was on my authorizing committee. So I got to know him very well. He was not a contentious person to deal with. He was fairly low-key and did not have the edge that Sam Nunn, John McCain, Strom Thurmond, or Carl Levin had--these guys bored in. Cohen tended not to--he was very erudite and very classical. We played a game with each other--he would always open his dialogue with me, his question period--with some classical quotation of Thucydides or Socrates and I would have to have something waiting in return to bat back at him.

Goldberg: Too bad you didn't have Rickover to take along with you. He would have had a lot of quotations too, but he always edited his material afterwards.

Rochester: From your experience with Aspin on the Hill, did you have higher expectations than what turned out to be the case when he was secretary of defense?

Powell: He was a fun committee chairman. I enjoyed debating with Les Aspin. He went after the base force with a passion. We talked about this before--his Option C was the way to cut the base force. Nunn allowed me to come back up and testify alone in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee to counter Aspin's Option C. I had known Les for years as a rumpled professor who was very knowledgeable about defense matters. He was a great committee chairman even though he wasn't of the party of the administration that I was in, but he didn't seem to me to be the kind of person who would bring line manager skills to the department. President Clinton listed several names to me when I met him in November 1992 as people he was looking at for secretary of defense--in other words, my boss-to-be. I can't remember if I have it in my memoirs or not, but Nunn was one of the names, there was another name, and Aspin for the third name.

Goldberg: How about Perry?

Powell: I don't think it was Perry.

Goldberg: It should have been.

Powell: I'm pretty sure that it wasn't Perry. They were political figures, but I can't remember who it was. I said to the president that I knew all of them. They were all good. Out of the three, I would not pick Les Aspin because I think his style is quite different. I did it as gently as I could. Here's a guy that's about to be president--I'd never met him before in my life--and he's asking me about who my new boss ought to be. But I made it clear to him that I didn't think Aspin would be the right choice.

He merely remarked, "Well, he's very smart--people think he's very smart." Yes, he is.

Goldberg: That would appeal to Clinton too.

Powell: President Clinton, I think, because of his own lack of background in this, didn't really know what he needed.

Rochester: He was not going to give it as much attention as some of the other appointments.

Powell: Not only give enough attention, he didn't bring a context to it. He didn't bring a perspective to it, and he had nobody around him in that transition team who could--not Warren Christopher, Vernon Jordan, Sandy Berger, Tony Lake, or George Stephanopoulos--nice guys all, but none of them brought that perspective. In fact, it was almost "We've got to have a Defense Department, we're stuck with it. So give it to somebody to run, but 'it's the economy, stupid, and the cold war is over'." And the only thing going on when he took office was this little feeding operation in Somalia, and bombing Iraq a little bit.

Goldberg: Carter faced the same thing when he came in as far as his entourage was concerned.

Powell: Yes.

Goldberg: It was an amateur entourage.

Powell: I never called them amateurs because they won the election. But they were amateurs with respect to what we needed at the Pentagon.

Goldberg: This has been a problem that presidents have had all along. They brought their election people into the White House and expected them to be able to run the government as well as they could run an election.

Powell: Reagan didn't make that mistake.

Rochester: How would Sam Nunn have done?

Powell: He would have been great. We might have disagreed on things. I probably would have fought with Sam more than I fought with Cheney or Aspin.

But I have very high regard for Sam. When he's wrong, he's big wrong.

Goldberg: You have already talked about military assistants and their role in relation to the secretary and the deputy secretary. How about the relationship between the chairman and the military assistants to the secretary and the deputy secretary? You obviously must have had dealings with them too.

Powell: Yes, I had a strong relationship with Dave Jones. In my time it was Dave Jones, Jack Vessey and Bill Crowe. All of them understood the role the military assistant played. The only difficulty I ever had was with the military assistant to one of the chairmen, who shall go unnamed. When I became military assistant at one point, there was a little unhappiness with me because I wasn't like the guy I replaced. There was a little bit of backbiting going on downstairs with that Powell upstairs. So that military assistant and I had to have words. He was from the same service as I was and one grade lower, so it was easy.

Goldberg: He was a deputy military assistant?

Powell: He was military assistant to the chairman and I was military assistant to the secretary. But generally as chairman, I had good relations with the military

assistants. And as military assistant, I had good relations with the chairmen--all three of them.

Goldberg: Presumably, there were some exceptions along the way. It depended on the people who held the jobs.

Powell: Now, I am sure there was many a day when a chairman went downstairs unhappy with something that had happened upstairs, and took liberties with my name. But for the most part, that was over the next day. I think I would call Dave Jones, Jack Vessey and Bill Crowe close friends at this point.

Goldberg: Cheney kept emphasizing the importance of the military assistants as distinct from his special assistants, but there were special assistants who exercised a good deal of power under the secretaries. What was your view of the role of the special assistants? People like John Kester and David Addington who were among the stronger ones.

Powell: They were the strongest that I knew. For a long time there wasn't one. When Kester left, Carl Smith worked it to make sure there was no other Kester.

Goldberg: Togo West came in.

Powell: Then Togo left. Togo did not have the power, authority or influence that John did. It's up to the secretary as to what he thinks he needs. I took the position at one point that too much was being asked of the military assistant and there was a danger that I and my successors were getting too close to political matters--White House things that are best handled by a civilian special assistant. I think the secretary needs both--a strong military assistant and a strong special assistant. Addington performed that role well. There is enough there that you can carve them

out. The only time you get a conflict is when you have games to be played about who controls the secretary's schedule. That is best solved by letting the military assistant worry about it, because most of the meetings have to do with military matters, not political matters. Addington, I thought, did it very well. He did a hatchet job---he stuck knives in people's back, blew off kneecaps, and took care of the White House. He kept them all at bay and did those things that a secretary needs to have done--disciplined the civilian staff and stayed out of the way of the military assistants. He let the military assistant worry about calendars, office politics, and when a receptionist needs to be fired or one of the primadona secretaries needs to be disciplined.

Goldberg: You know it's interesting--both of them downplayed their roles as special assistants.

Powell: Kester downplayed his role?

Goldberg: Yes.

Powell: Get out of here!

Goldberg: He emphasized that he limited himself. He didn't get into a lot of matters that people in that position might get into.

Powell: That is not necessarily downplaying his role, that is sort of saying that he didn't do some trivial stuff that others could do. Remember that I was Kester's exec. He gave the trivial stuff to me.

Goldberg: He wasn't talking about trivial stuff. But he only stayed two years.

An interesting thing there also was that Brown didn't know him from Adam before he appointed him to the job. Some other people recommended him. Cheney knew

Addington before he took the job, but not all that well. Both were lawyers, which is not unusual for people in that position.

Powell: I think you need a lawyer in that job.

Goldberg: Really. Well, they also emphasize the extent to which they stayed out of military matters.

Powell: Except in Kester's case with personnel matters.

Goldberg: Military personnel.

Powell: Right.

Goldberg: Yes, he admitted to that. But he only stayed two years.

Powell: So, not a short period of time.

Goldberg: Not a short period of time?

Powell: Yes, two years. You know the law--the history.

Goldberg: Right, but for somebody coming in fresh to the thing, not having any real background.

Powell: John had to get back out into the practice of law.

Goldberg: Yes, he told us that.

Powell: He put one of his chosen people in--Togo.

Goldberg: Yes.

Powell: Sara Lister.

Goldberg: This is going back in time now, to the Grenada operation. Secretary Weinberger told us that he had insisted on doubling the size of the forces to be used in Grenada. Do you have any recollection of that?

Powell: I have recollection of him saying that. I don't know when he did it.

Goldberg: He said that he ordered it done.

Powell: I'm sure he did.

Goldberg: He insisted.

Powell: I wasn't present when he did it. None of the military assistants were involved in Grenada.

Goldberg: In connection with Panama, how much operational control directly or indirectly did you exercise?

Powell: Which Panama thing? The actual invasion?

Goldberg: Yes.

Powell: I monitored it minute to minute. In the first hours of the operation I was in the command center in constant touch with General Thurman. One of the first things was to get the spy out--the CIA guy. So we had a special operations attack that started the operation. I was deeply involved in the planning for it--the allocation of forces. I approved the plan and monitored it very carefully for the first several days. There was high political content to it. It was the first example of almost total media coverage on the scene. There were rumors that had to be put down, getting to the facts and starting to look at operations in terms of the media impact they had. If you are not doing violence to what the commander is trying to do, you can suggest to him that there are some things that he's doing that don't help us in a broader sense. Some people will call this meddling or micro managing.

Goldberg: He's supposed to listen.

Powell: If I tell him to, he is, because I am not going to tell a CINC to do something that the secretary has told me not to tell him. For example, the playing of the loud

speakers sounded like a clever idea. I'm sure the PSYOPS guys were having great fun. I'm sure they thought that was cool. We told them to knock it off, because from three levels up, in terms of the worldwide impact, it looks silly. Or when they try to persuade me that it was okay that they had just knocked the doors down and raced into and taken weapons out of the building, because weapons were in there. They said it was not a foreign embassy, which was complaining about the attack. I could see CNN pictures of the foreign embassy, and as I looked at it I could see the big seal that they usually have next to the door of the foreign embassy. Then I could look at the curb, and on the sidewalk was the absolutely distinctive fingerprint of an M-113 track chopping up the curbstone. I know what it looks like when the outside of the track running along a curbstone cuts it every six inches. A car does not do that. The only thing that does that is an armored personnel carrier or tank. They kept saying, "No, we weren't there--we didn't do it." I said, "Guys--let's get our act together. I'm looking at a television picture that shows me a curbstone that has been chopped up by a track. Don't tell me that you weren't there. Go find out what happened." They did. And, of course we were there--we made a mistake. Good, let's say we made a mistake. Let's not cover it, because we are protecting a lieutenant, we'll take care of him. Nobody is going to hurt him. But let's not try to blow something off that we can't. That was the first exposure that I had to this kind of conflict where you had tactical needs, operational needs, strategic needs, political needs, and public relations needs. Anybody who tells you that you can ignore the public relations need in order to deal with the tactical need, under all circumstances, is not right. You have to constantly balance these things. Sometimes it works out,

sometimes it doesn't. When Les Aspin did not support my recommendation to send additional troops to Somalia, he paid for that later. But he made a political strategic judgment that he felt was superior to the recommendation I gave him. That was okay. That was what he was supposed to do, but he got caught. Even if that reinforcement had been in place it would not have changed the outcome of the operation. But nobody wanted to hear that. They needed a scapegoat, so Aspin paid the price. It was not fair.

Goldberg: Panama gave you experience and background for a much larger operation later on--Desert Storm---in which you played a leading role in connection with Cheney, President Bush and others. You were involved in the decisions that were being made back here. You didn't make them yourself obviously.

Presumably, the president exercised the final say as usual, but you were involved as a major adviser on all of these decisions. Did any of them give you any particular trouble?

Powell: With myself or with my superiors?

Goldberg: Both.

Powell: Yes, all of it. Decision-making is seldom clean-cut where you actually know that what you are doing is right. I was not plagued by self-doubt, but I found it useful to be plagued by the possibility that I wasn't right. I think it is a healthy thing to keep in mind--do I have this right on every decision? Sending the 82nd in all by itself, what should go first, what should go second.

Goldberg: Who was making those decisions?

Powell: Schwarzkopf and I.

Goldberg: Jointly.

Powell: Yes. They were recommendations from Norm. Norm was the commander and I would only challenge him if I thought that something really was out of tolerance, and that was very seldom. The regular line of communication allowed us to talk so much that Norm and I were essentially in each other's mind constantly. So, I was seldom surprised by his thinking and he was seldom surprised by my thinking. It wasn't like in World War II where you had to wait for messages to sort of cross. There was a written interrogatory going on all the time. We were talking as conversationally as you and I are talking all day long. So we very seldom surprised one another. If there was something that we weren't agreeing on, we would talk it through before it became problem and decide what we were going to do.

Goldberg: You were also talking with Secretary Cheney and President Bush presumably at the same period.

Powell: Yes, and my job was to make sure that Norm understood what they were thinking and not just what they had decided--what the tone and intent of every conversation was.

Goldberg: Were they very amenable to what you and Schwarzkopf were telling them?

Powell: Yes. Cheney had a technique that was very effective of listening and almost always supporting, but not without strip-searching me--not without knowing what it was that Norm and I were asking for and why we needed it. As we talked previously, and as I mentioned in my memoirs, he was remarkable in terms of the time he spent learning how to be a soldier, sailor, airman and marine.

Goldberg: He mentioned that to us.

Powell: At the end of the day, we gave him a certificate. He would run out of briefings he could ask us for. There was nothing left to brief on. We gave him the last one of these "How do we do it" briefings--Tom Kelley, J-3 [and Hope Douglas], presented him with a graduate degree in constructive War College credits. But I loved it, because I had a guy who understood what I was talking about. When we talked about tank warfare, we had given him classes on tank warfare. When we talked about how we targeted a cruise missile, he knew how we targeted a cruise missile and where it was done--Norfolk or out in the Pacific-- what you had to put into it and what it could or couldn't do. This is what fiber does to an electrical grid. We showed it to him--we showed him the fiber, we showed him the ignition. So he knew what he was approving.

Goldberg: Did you find other secretaries as knowledgeable as he was?

Powell: I don't think any of the ones I worked with--Weinberger, Carlucci, Brown and Aspin, were as knowledgeable as Cheney proved to be on Desert Storm. None of the others had quite the challenge he had, or had the need to be as knowledgeable as Cheney.

Goldberg: In the adoption of a strategy that was followed in Iraq, how much of a role did OSD, in particular Wolfowitz and company, play?

Powell: I think Paul played a large role. He was very thoughtful, very smart. He would come up with good suggestions and ideas, but more by asking questions than challenging us. He caused us to sharpen our thinking. So I had no difficulty in working with Paul. His assistant secretary, Harry Rowen, had some difficulty with

Paul. Harry would come up with ideas that would get shot into Secretary Cheney through Paul; that procedure was occasionally troublesome. The one blowup we did have was when he came up with an idea--I can't remember too clearly right now, but it was another way to attack and how to start the conflict now. He shot it into Secretary Cheney without me seeing it. I'm in Europe and late one night I get a call saying that this idea has come in and the secretary has taken it to the White House. So, it goes to the White House with no knowledge on my part or Schwarzkopf's part. General Scowcroft listens to it with the president and essentially shoots it down. It came up again a couple more times.

Goldberg: Who brought it up? Cheney?

Powell: Cheney. It came up a couple more times to see if anybody would salute it. Brent Scowcroft found it without merit and shot it down. I told the secretary that this was troubling to me. "You are free to do what you want, Sir, but it's not good to take ideas that are not going to be executed by the idea maker and start presenting it to the president without the commander-in-chief who has to execute it being knowledgeable of it." If you don't like what we are doing, tell us and we will try to respond. There were a number of times during the conflict, which is well documented, when we didn't like the plans that were coming from the Gulf. We told Norm that this didn't do it, and those plans were modified. We worked our way through it. We couldn't deal with an assistant secretary of defense who took the summer off and was relaxing in Provence and came up with this idea. While we were building up, he was relaxing on vacation in August.

Goldberg: Rowen?

Powell: Yes.

Goldberg: Provence?

Powell: Yes, it was time for his summer vacation.

Goldberg: I thought that belonged to Richard Perle.

Powell: He might have been hanging around with Richard. It's a lovely place. I spent the summer there with Richard myself once. But, he comes back with these ideas and he ships them in. He has written articles subsequently saying that only if his ideas had been followed the whole war would have been won in one day instead of four years.

Goldberg: Harry had been in business about 40 years by then. He had a lot of confidence in his ideas.

Powell: He was the only one that I had some difficulty with.

Goldberg: Wolfowitz--no problem?

Powell: No.

Goldberg: Wolfowitz did play a part in advancing strategic ideas.

Powell: Yes. I always found Paul's input useful--sometimes annoying, but always useful. He was always trying to get the best product, and he served the secretary extremely well as a senior civilian policy official. No secretary should go through his appointment without having a strong powerful civilian policy official to watch the chairman and the chiefs.

Goldberg: Wolfowitz did.

Powell: Yes, Wolfowitz did. Hadley and Rowen did.

Goldberg: Three deep. Wolfowitz seemed to have exercised a good bit of influence on Cheney. Cheney spoke very approvingly of him and of his advice on many matters. Did Desert Storm indicate some kind of a strengthened hand for the CINCs?

Powell: Yes, I think that is a good observation. Norm came out of that conflict demonstrating what a strong CINC does. It was also a very good performance on the part of all CINCs. Every CINC realized that this was a test of the armed forces and every CINC forgot his own parochial needs and interests to support the CINC who was going to fight this conflict. So I had General Galvin and General Saint in Europe not complaining about a thing, sending everything we needed, especially General Saint who was absolutely yeoman performing in moving that Corps to the Gulf--over a holiday period in Europe using every train he could get his hands on. The PACOM commander sent all of the aircraft carriers we asked for--stripped his theater. The only problem I ever had with a CINC--just to make this an interesting story--it wasn't really a problem, it was something done by the SOUTHCOM commander, at the time General Joulwan, I guess.

Goldberg: He succeeded Galvin as SACEUR.

Powell: George was a little concerned that I was taking away too much of his intelligence aviation capability looking for drugs. He begged to keep some part of that capability. I forgot what I did. He too, was supportive of what was going on. That was the only incident I can think of where I had to choose between Schwarzkopf and that other CINC in charge. Drugs are important. I forget how I resolved it.

Goldberg: Just out of curiosity, a couple SACEURS, perhaps more, have come out of SOUTHCOM. Any significance to that at all or just chance?

Powell: SOUTHCOM is not the premier CINC. Sometimes it's a good place to put a guy in waiting. It's only two in a row that I can think of, Galvin and Joulwan. I wouldn't read anything into it. I think it's a command that probably can go away.

Goldberg: What were your views on the All-Volunteer Force, initially and after it was instituted?

Powell: As with most young officers in the 70's we didn't like the idea that the country was sort of saying, "This is no longer something we are going to draft our children to do." So, I had those same reservations, but by the time the Reagan administration came along, and we proved what we could do with it, I became a great supporter of it.

Goldberg: How about the National Guard and Reserve issue, which has been with us all through our history, but especially for the last 50 years has been a constant struggle?

Powell: I was always a supporter. I worked with the National Guard when I was a major at Fort Benning; I worked with them again when I was a colonel at Fort Campbell; I worked with them again when I was assistant commander division commander at Fort Carson; I worked with them again as a Corps commander, and I commanded them as FORSCOM commander. I have always been a great supporter of the National Guard and Reserves. But I would always simultaneously be annoyed at the claims that come out of the Guard and Reserve structure for things they can do but they really can't do. If they could do some of the things they

claim they could do then we ought to get rid of the active force. If we can do this with people just doing it one weekend a year, then why have an active force. I used to go beyond tolerance when I heard the National Guard commanders say that the Guard division is as ready as an active division. It's not right and it does a disservice to our strategy and frankly it does a disservice to the Guardsmen, because if somebody ever holds them to account, they can't match it--they can't make it.

Goldberg: It happened with Desert Storm--the chips were down.

Powell: Yes, and they are complaining to this day about it. But the fact of the matter is that it would have been irresponsible for us to deploy those brigades before they were ready to be deployed. There was no reason to expect them to be ready to be deployed. The Guards saw it as a test case, and if they weren't ready then why do we need all of this structure. The answer is: We didn't need all of that structure, especially at the end of the Cold War period. We never got rid of it. In fact, I think it's gotten worse.

Goldberg: They have too much political clout.

Powell: There was no political clout coming from the other side once Cheney left. Cheney was going after them. We got 50 percent of the reductions we sought. Cheney was willing to invest his political capital in it. I was willing to try to do it the right way--not denigrating the Guard and Reserves but giving them the right structure, the right missions, reshaping and reducing them in a sensible prudent way. But it became too hard to do and frankly once Mr. Cheney left the air went out of it. So now we have the high readiness brigades that were supposed to replace some of the divisions. And the divisions are still there. The low readiness brigades

were supposed to go away. They are still there. Now we have created two Army division headquarters that make absolutely no sense to me. They are senseless--to supervise three National Guard brigades. So we are wasting more active duty headquarters force structure to supervise people who don't need supervision. It's my judgement. They did it in order to get out of the bind they found themselves in with the Guard. The Army got themselves in a real bind and had to buy their way out with ideas like this, which to me is nonsensical. But it will go away in a few years.

Goldberg: I read an article yesterday that said that 58 percent of all combat troops for the Army are now National Guard and Reserves.

Powell: I think that's not a shocking number. It has always been a high number.

Goldberg: It also assumes that they are all ready to go.

Powell: They are not.

Goldberg: Right off the bat--it's part of the article. These are the fighting men now. These weekend warriors are ready to go on a moment's notice.

Powell: It's unfair to expect them to be ready to go on a moment's notice. That's why they are called Reserves.

Goldberg: Eisenhower tried for eight years to cut them down without success. Congress defeated him every time.

Powell: We have had success. They are not as large as they used to be. The chart I would use that no congressman could refute was that the Reserves went up in size in the Reagan buildup by 40 percent. The reason they went up from 1981 through some years later in the decade was the Cold War. Gentlemen and ladies, the Cold War is over. Is it reasonable to bring them down to where they were in 1981? From

a long period like that we shot them up, and the reason for that growth was the Cold War--the Reagan buildup. So it's gone, it's over. Can we bring them down to where they were? That was a chart that was irrefutable. Every time I would pull it out they would start leaving the meetings.

Goldberg: If the military hadn't gotten as much money as they did during the 80's would they have put that much into the Reserves?

Powell: No, of course not.

Goldberg: They had the money thrown at them.

Powell: We created units.

Goldberg: What about interservice competition affecting operations, policies and programs? Did you see it as being any different during your period than it had been before?

Powell: There is always interservice competition. I don't want to be in a force where everybody does not want to go to war, and where everybody does not want to try out their capabilities and want to do their very best. But in my time, it was manageable. I had a strong secretary who would back what the CINC felt he needed and what I felt we needed and not just what the services felt we needed. Even though the Marines were dying, as an institutional matter, to do an amphibious operation during Desert Storm, they never did it because it wasn't necessary, it wasn't smart.

Goldberg: You have been viewed as cautious and reluctant to commit U.S. forces to combat because of the fear of casualties and the effect on your public opinion and support.

Powell: No, I have never been reluctant or cautious to send troops into combat because of casualties.

Goldberg: I said you have been viewed that way. I didn't say that you actually were. Edward Luttwak has suggested that the public attitude as compared with World War II, for instance, has been greatly influenced by the decline in the size of the American family. During World War II you had families losing two, three, four or five sons in battle. Now, they have only one or two children. This is one of his theories about our problem with committing forces and our concern about casualties. Do you think that plays a role?

Powell: Over the years I have made it a conscious point not to spend time commenting on Ed Luttwak.

Goldberg: And some other people too, probably.

Powell: Especially Ed.

Goldberg: How much credit do you give to the Reagan military buildup and to SDI for the fall of the Soviets?

Powell: They played a role. What really defeated the Soviets was the failed system in democracy and freedom and the individual rights of men and women. SDI allowed Gorbachev to use it as a mirror in the eyes of the Soviets saying, "Look, what are we going to do now? Spend another zillion/billion in rubles chasing this?"

Goldberg: You would say it was a combination of factors and this was one.

Powell: Of course.

Goldberg: There are those who say that this was the prime factor--that this is what really did it to the Soviets.

Powell: Who knows. It came along at a prime time. If it had come along with some other Soviet leader, it might not have made a difference. It came along at a time when we had a Soviet leader who was looking for a reason to end it all. Gorbachev needed help in getting out of the box that the Soviets had put themselves into. We had kept them in the box with the march of democracy and the free enterprise system.

Goldberg: Given the circumstances in the Soviet Union at the time, might not other leaders also have had the same outlook?

Powell: Could be, but the three before him who were rapidly dying, I don't think were big enough or strong enough. Would there have been another Gorbachev-like figure? Sure, I suspect Yeltsin, if he had been Gorbachev, would have done the same thing. I don't know for sure.

Goldberg: Nixon thought that it was the failure of the Soviet system that was the chief factor in its demise.

Powell: That was the whole basis of our strategy for 50 years--that this would ultimately collapse of its own lie.

Goldberg: Yes, we said that in the 1950's too. We waited a long time. We waited them out.

Powell: We are going to wait out Saddam Hussein, we're going to wait out Kim Jong Il--we're going to win.

Goldberg: Let's hope so.

Powell: We'll wait out the Ayatollahs, and we'll win.

Goldberg: Did you view the Clinton White House as antimilitary?

Powell: These are journalistic questions.

Goldberg: I'm talking about the president and his staff.

Powell: The president was not antimilitary. The president didn't know the military. He had to learn the military.

Goldberg: Secretary Cheney said that half of success in this town is acting like you know what you are doing.

Powell: One hundred percent of success. I know what he means. It's a very wise comment and what it essentially says--my version of it is--never let them see you sweat. When you are in a crisis in this town with all of the public attention and media coverage that now goes with a crisis, you have to project a sense of confidence--that you know what you are doing, not to worry, trust me, we know how to handle this. If you develop that sense of confidence and it translates into trust, then that is more than half the battle.

Goldberg: You have been viewed as being successful in doing this during your career.

Powell: I am flattered.

Goldberg: I say that on the basis of having talked with a great many people who worked with you, for you, with whom you worked.

Powell: It was part of my training--a lieutenant should never look or act cold no matter how cold it is.

Goldberg: You have worked with an awful lot of people here over the years--president, secretaries and other officials. Which ones impressed you most?

Powell: All of them. I never single out—I would never say I like Cheney better than Weinberger.

Goldberg: That's not the question I am asking.

Powell: They all impress me in one way or the other. I was impressed certainly by Carlucci, Weinberger, Cheney, and Perry. I was impressed by Aspin but not all of Aspin. I have been very impressed by the people I have worked for.

Goldberg: Aside from being impressed, what about their performances?

Powell: I have worked for hundreds of people, who would you like me to rate?

Goldberg: The presidents to begin with.

Powell: I will never rate the presidents.

Goldberg: The secretaries?

Powell: They all were my commanders.

Goldberg: How about the secretaries of state?

Powell: The two I worked with most closely--Baker and Shultz--were exceptional gentlemen. Warren Christopher was an exceptional gentleman as well, who I think had a difficult situation in an administration where foreign policy was not a first priority and really wasn't organized to do foreign policy very well for the first part of its term.

Goldberg: What was a typical working day for you as chairman?

Powell: Six a.m. to eight p.m. with take-home stuff.

Goldberg: Six days a week?

Powell: Five. I never went to the office on Saturdays or Sundays unless there was a crisis and I had to be there. It didn't mean that I wasn't working. I was usually

working the whole day at home. I had a distinct habit of not working in the Pentagon on weekends in order to show my staff that you spend the weekend catching up, sweeping up the mess I made or recharging your batteries. Anybody who knows I was going to the Pentagon on Saturday will show up. So I didn't come in.

Goldberg: A lot of secretaries did come in on Saturdays, didn't they?

Powell: Not mine. The office was closed.

Goldberg: Weinberger didn't?

Powell: No, Weinberger seldom came in.

Goldberg: Carlucci?

Powell: Carlucci, never.

Goldberg: Cheney?

Powell: No, we didn't work on Saturdays.

Goldberg: That's interesting because prior to Weinberger....

Powell: Harold worked every day. Mrs. Brown had to pry him out every night, but Weinberger, Carlucci, and Cheney came in with a different philosophy--that we are not at war. That was a philosophy that I whole-heartily endorsed. I don't like working seven days a week. If I work seven days a week then I would cause other people to work nine days, because I am a generator of work. The boss generates work. As national security adviser, we worked five days a week. It was a little harder, and I would often have to go into the White House on Saturdays, but with secure communications and other ways of passing information, there really was no reason to work seven days a week. When I was the deputy national security adviser I had to catch Carlucci. Frank would try to split at 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon. I would

grab him--“were are you going?” “I have a tennis date, I’ll be back later.” No, he wouldn’t. But that was very healthy. Reagan left at 3 o’clock every Friday afternoon to go to Camp David. When we went to the California White House in Santa Barbara it was wonderful. We all hung out at the Biltmore. The president was at the ranch 30 miles away. We would call him every morning to tell him whether the world was collapsing or not. And if it wasn’t--thank you very much--and that’s the last we heard of him. In Washington, we seldom heard from the president from Friday afternoon to Sunday night. It is only in recent years that it has become this seven-day-a-week peripatetic chasing around with the president working all weekend. I think it’s a terrible idea.

Goldberg: There was some of that earlier too, of course.

Powell: It wasn’t that way during the Reagan years. The president did not work on weekends.

Goldberg: Earlier.

Powell: Bush was pretty good about going off to Camp David on the weekends.

Goldberg: Do you have any particular views on the role of women in the military?

Powell: I’m all for them except in ground combat and tanks.

Goldberg: What did you consider your major achievements as chairman?

Powell: I’ll let others judge.

Goldberg: Did you have any particular disappointments?

Powell: No, I had a good run.

Goldberg: What about your current views on nuclear weapons? You have already said something about that.

Powell: I am in favor of arms control. There may be an opportunity in the future for further reductions. I'm pretty comfortable about where we are now and I would not adopt any of the positions advocated by some of my former colleagues--General Butler, General Goodpaster and others--who suggest further unilateral, serious reductions. I am a great believer in deterrence. Even if we put in the best missile defense system that you can imagine, it won't be perfect and it should not be a substitute for a deterrence force. We don't want to see whether it works. If you do fire on us we have a defense system. The first system we have is a sure deterrence, sure destruction.

Goldberg: Were you in favor of the Somalia adventure?

Powell: The first one with Bush, yes; the second one, no.

Goldberg: You favored going in initially?

Powell: Yes.

Goldberg: Are there any questions we should have asked?

Powell: No. There is a very extensive transcript created by my collaborator, Joe Persico, and me. There is much more detail on Desert Storm and on subsequent years. I will eventually add it to my papers and other materials already at the National Defense University. It will be a rich resource.