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**IN WAKE OF TRAGEDIES IN U.S., COLIN POWELL THANKS
HEMISPHERE'S FOREIGN MINISTERS FOR SOLIDARITY**

The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, told the Hemisphere's Foreign Ministers, who had adopted the Inter-American Democratic Charter by acclamation moments earlier Tuesday morning, that their support and solidarity would serve as a source of strength in the wake of a series of tragedies that struck U.S. cities Tuesday morning.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas are in the Peruvian capital Lima, for the 28th special session of the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, called specifically to adopt the charter that is intended to strengthen the OAS' capabilities to help the Western Hemisphere's nations protect and defend democracy.

Powell said: "I will take the expression of your solidarity... the condolences that you've expressed, to the grieving families. And I will take the spirit of this conference- the strength of the OAS-back to the United States with me and it will be a source of inspiration and strength to us in the difficult days that lay ahead."

At Powell's request, the Assembly President, Peruvian Foreign Minister Diego García Sayán, moved the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter forward so Powell could be part of the consensus on this new charter on democracy. "I very much want to be here to express the United States' commitment to democracy in this Hemisphere," declared Mr. Powell. "It is the most important thing I can do before departing to go back to Washington D.C. and attend to the important business that awaits me and all of my other colleagues in the Administration and all Americans."

Vowing the U.S. authorities would deal with this tragedy "in a way that brings those responsible to justice," the U.S. Secretary of State described terrorism as everyone's problem, noting the fight against terrorism is "something we must all unite behind... as democratic nations committed to individual liberties committed to the rights of the people to live in peace and freedom."

Mr. Powell said despite the "terrible, terrible tragedy" that has befallen his nation, all the nations of this Hemisphere and the world at large as well as who believe in democracy...terrorist acts "will never be allowed to kill the spirit of democracy."