

**The White House**  
**President George W. Bush**

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## **National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice Interview with ZDF German Television**

Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
Room 459

11:52 A.M. EDT

Q Dr. Rice, let us start with a question to the academic/teacher Condoleezza Rice. Struggling to find a comparison in history for America's position in the world now, people have come up with the Roman Empire, as in comparison. There's an obvious difference: America doesn't strive to acquire foreign countries. But beyond that, would you, as an academic, accept the comparison?

DR. RICE: I wouldn't accept the comparison to the Roman Empire, of course, because the United States has no imperial ambitions. This is an unusual time. The United States has a preponderance of military power. It, of course, has a strong economy, a lot of influence in the world. But I think the point that's been missed here is that it is really the alliance of states that were on the right side of history after World War II, the countries that dedicated themselves to values -- human values of democracy and freedom of speech and freedom of religion and prosperity for people based on human dignity. That is really the alliance that is very, very powerful.

Yes, the United States is the most powerful state within that alliance. But we see this, really, as an opportunity for states that share values to have an opportunity to bring those values to other parts of the world where they are not yet -- have not yet taken hold.

If I think of a historical analogy, I think rather of what happened after World War II, when the United States -- after having fought in two European wars -- came back to Europe and helped to create a whole set of institutions like NATO, and to spearhead the Marshall Plan, and to contribute to the creation of a new kind of Germany that became an anchor for a democratic Europe.

We're now trying to do that, in a sense, in the Middle East, with Iraq and with the Palestinian state and with what we've done in Afghanistan. And there, again, it is the spread of values that will make us more secure. And so I think of this rather as a period of the triumph of states that are committed to a set of values, not the triumph of the United States alone.

Q Europeans, increasingly, especially after the Iraq crisis, have a suspicion that America is not really looking for allies any more, but rather for followers. The difference being that an ally can determine the course of action, or be part of the determination. A follower just follows. And it seems that in many important cases, from land mine ban, from Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, to the International Court of Justice, America seems to say, it's either our way or no way. We are strong enough to

determine what's done and what's not done. And you either lead, follow, or get out of the way.

DR. RICE: Well, there, clearly, will be differences from time to time -- even among the strongest allies -- on what to do about a specific set of issues. Yes, the United States has had real difficulties with the international criminal court. We are a country that believes very much in the sovereignty of our own Constitution over our citizens. And so we've been concerned about that.

But if you look at the cooperation that we've had in the criminal court dealing with the tribunals in Yugoslavia, you see that the United States is not opposed to the principle of having tribunals to try to war crimes. We've had very good cooperation on the big issues, on the expansion of NATO, of bringing Russia toward the West. We have a big job to do in Afghanistan. One of the places that Germany has been really quite remarkable, and in fact, probably after the United States, the most important country, is in Afghanistan, in the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force. We have many, many examples -- the World Trade Organization -- many examples where we are working together very, very well.

Occasionally, we'll have differences. But that does not mean that the United States does not value its allies, does not value the opinions of its allies. And it, most especially, does not mean that we don't need allies. We need allies and need them badly.

Q When the United Nations cannot be the system of checks and balances, even for the largest of the players on the globe, where are checks and balances coming from in the future when America says, we are entitled to preemptive strikes when we feel that our security is threatened? Even after the Iraqi experience, when it is now in doubt internationally that the real reason for the war was actually there, America still says, we determine what's good for us, and if the United Nations helps us, great. If not, we go it alone.

DR. RICE: Well, the interesting thing about the Iraq case was that the United Nations had determined that Saddam Hussein was a threat. This is a regime that was sanctioned by the United Nations 17 times in resolutions, many of them referring directly to the threat of his weapons of mass destruction. This was a regime in which the United Nations had tried to put inspectors into the country, only to have them effectively pulled out of the country because they couldn't do their work. These were -- this was a regime that had lost a war in 1991, signed on to a set of obligations to the United Nations, and then systematically violated them. And so the idea that somehow this was an American decision to deal with the Iraqi regime, what the United States finally did -- not just the United States but a number of other countries, as well -- is to say that if U.N. resolutions are to actually matter, if countries are not just to violate them without -- with impunity, to have no responsibility for violating those, then the U.N. is not going to be very strong. The Security Council is not going to be very strong. And, indeed, Resolution 1441, the one that set up new inspections was a 15 to 0 vote of the U.N. Security Council.

So, yes, we had a disagreement in the final analysis of what means to use to deal with the Iraqi crisis. But that Iraq was a threat, that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq had used those weapons of mass destruction on its neighbors and its own people, that Iraq had ambitions in the volatile region of the Middle East and was therefore a danger to international security, these were shared premises of the entire international community represented by the 17 United Nations Security

Council resolutions that sanctioned Iraq.

Q Does that mean it is not all that important that within the next six or 12 months, my friend David Kaye, will find proof for weapons of mass destruction?

DR. RICE: Going into the war against Iraq, we had very strong intelligence. I've been in this business for 20 years. And some of the strongest intelligence cases that I've seen, key judgments by our intelligence community that Saddam Hussein could have a nuclear weapon by the end of the decade, if left unchecked; that he had biological and chemical weapons; that he was trying to reconstitute his nuclear program. We had very strong intelligence going in. Nobody doubted that he had weapons of mass destruction.

Now, we are now in Iraq. And as you mentioned, David Kaye is systematically going to understand precisely what happened to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the state of their programs. We do know that this was a program that over 12 years was built for deception. We know that it was a program that took into account the fact that there might be inspectors in the country, the fact that there were sanctions, and that designed the program, therefore -- the Iraqi regime designed the program so that it couldn't be discovered.

And so it will take some time, but we're uncovering, literally, miles of documents. We are coming into contact with more and more people who were a part of the programs. And we will be able to put together a full picture of what Saddam Hussein was really intending to do. But I have no doubt that that picture will confirm that this was a regime that was a grave threat to international peace and security because of its intent on having the world's worst weapons.

Q Would you agree that for the next case down the road -- history will tell what it is -- American credibility rests on proving that case?

DR. RICE: The case against Iraq was not just an issue of American intelligence. It was an issue, also, of intelligence services around the world; of U.N. reports that there were large quantities of missing chemical and biological agents; of defectors -- including Saddam Hussein's own brother-in-laws, who had left the country and revealed major weapons programs. No, there is no issue of credibility here. The case going in was one in which everyone shared the view that this was a country that had weapons of mass destruction, that had tried to use -- had used weapons of mass destruction. And you had to believe, somehow, that after the inspectors left the country in 1998, that this had somehow gotten better between 1998 and 2003. It's just not plausible.

Q I have one minute for two questions now. I get signals. (Laughter.) And it's your schedule that dictates that. Korea -- has the situation for the 30,000 U.S. troops in Korea changed in any way recently, through recent developments? And what's their purpose now when the threat is becoming so much greater?

DR. RICE: Well, absolutely, the most important thing about the Korean peninsula is the alliance between the United States and South Korea that has helped to keep the peace on the Korean peninsula. And the American forces have been a part of that. We seen no change in the requirements.

But we do see potential changes in how we might meet those requirements. And I think there's been some discussion of that in the press and, certainly, with the South Korean government. But the American forces there are a firm commitment to an alliance with South Korea and to a presence in Asia that has served the world well.

There have been a lot of changes in military technology. There have been a lot of changes in the threat environment. But there's been no change and will not be a change in the solidity of the U.S.-South Korean alliance.

Q Final question, looking 25 -- again, asking the historian, looking 25 or even 50 years down the road, what's your vision of the role of the United States then? Will it still be the dominant power that it is today? Or are we in a window of history that is slowly closing again?

DR. RICE: The next 25 years I would hope would be the triumph of the values that we all hold dear. The United States will have a role in that. It is, indeed, the strongest country. But it won't be the only country to have a role in that. And I think rather than concerning ourselves with what our individual or specific roles will have to be, we need to concern ourselves with what it is we're trying to achieve. And what we, the people of Germany, the United States, France, Great Britain, the new democracies of Eastern Europe that are so fortunate to live in places where human dignity is preserved, where democracy allows us that human dignity, we need to have as our goal the spread of those values. We need to have as our goal a balance of power that favors freedom -- a balance of power that allows all people to have those universal values.

Q Balance?

DR. RICE: Well, a balance of power in which all of us are devoted to the freedoms that we enjoy so much and should be able to spread to others.

We learned a very important lesson in 1945, just that security and principles, security and values are inextricably linked. No one can imagine a major war in Europe today. That is not because Europe finally got the balance of power right. It is because Germany became a functioning and prosperous democracy, made alliance with France -- a longtime enemy. No one could even imagine now a war between Germany and France. Our values do bring us security. And so we now need to see that across the globe. We need to worry about prosperity for others. We need to fight disease and poverty in places like Africa.

We have a huge agenda ahead of us. And if we can focus on that agenda, on the great project of finally seeing these values spread, I think it'll be far less important who's powerful and who's not 25 years from now.

Q Thank you very much.

DR. RICE: Thank you.

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