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## Briefing En Route Berlin, Germany

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

En Route Berlin, Germany

May 29, 2007

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we're off for a G-8 meeting and as is the custom with these G-8 meetings, it really gives an opportunity for foreign ministers both to preview what the heads of state will be doing at the G-8 starting on June the 6th, but also it's almost always the case that we spend a good deal of time on whatever the major issues are of the day. So I would expect that we'll talk about Darfur, about Kosovo, about Iran and the issues concerning its nuclear program, about Iraq and about Afghanistan, as well as other issues that may be on the agenda.

We will also take advantage of this meeting of the G-8 to hold on the margins of the G-8 a Quartet meeting, which is why David Welch is along. So the travel is straightforward this time; it's just David's here because we have a Quartet meeting and he's the Quartet envoy.

I'm looking forward also to going to Vienna for a women's empowerment meeting. This is something that women foreign ministers met together at the UNGA to try to advance issues concerning girls' education, political activity for women, including trying to get the United Nations to pay more attention to the fact that there are so few special representatives that are women. And then I'll go on to Spain.

But I'm very much looking forward to this trip. We're going to be in the east of Germany, which will be very interesting. I have not been to Potsdam since unification, so I'm looking forward to that as well.

So as I said, it's an opportunity really to discuss whatever is on the agenda. I'll have a number of kind of pull-aside bilaterals, not really extensive bilaterals because the time is very short, but I'm looking forward to meeting for the first time -- it's not the first time I've met him, but meeting for the first time with the new French Foreign Minister as well.

So let's take your questions.

**QUESTION:** I have a two-part question. First of all, in Israel there's a lot of debate going on right now about whether it makes sense to move away from the Palestinian track and to focus on talking to Syria. So I wondered what you thought about that and whether that would be an appropriate step at this point.

And secondly, related to that, there's been some commentary among pundits who said that you were kind of wasting your time with the whole focus on the political horizon over the last few months and that you'd be better served to focus more on getting a sustainable ceasefire among the Palestinians. And I just wanted to see how you'd react to that criticism.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, on the first, obviously there ultimately has to be a comprehensive peace, but I think that everybody agrees that the Israeli-Palestinian track is extremely important for a number of reasons but also unlocks the key to the Arab -- the use of the Arab initiatives and further engagement between the Arabs and the Israelis. And so I don't think there's any substitute for that activity. There's no substitute for trying to get to the place where the Palestinians finally have their state and the Israelis finally have a neighbor who can live in peace and security with them. It's at the core of a lot of problems in the region. And I think that what we've seen over the last few weeks with Hamas reinserting its violence course that it just underscores the need for there to be a political framework, a political horizon for those who want to pursue a two-state solution both on the Palestinian side and on the Israeli side.

It's not in the absence of the need for security. It's not in the absence of the need for a cessation of violence. And certainly, the work that General Dayton has been doing to work on the benchmarks that we have talked about, have talked about during the trip that I was out there last, can help contribute to both a more peaceful Palestinian territory and one that's more economically viable as you are able to move forward on some of the movement and access issues. But I don't, frankly, see my role as negotiating a ceasefire between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. There ought to be a cessation of violence because there ought to be a cessation of violence, and the Palestinians themselves have been pursuing that course and some of the Arab states have been helping them. But I just don't see any substitute for continuing to work on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Let me just be very clear. No one is opposed to Israel pursuing other tracks, including a Syria track. But my understanding is that it's the view of the Israelis and certainly our view that the Syrians are engaged in behavior right now that is destabilizing to the region. But it's not a view that there shouldn't be such a track. When it's ready, it should be.

In terms of -- well, that answers your questions, both of them. Right, Glenn?

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Iran today formally charged Haleh Esfandiari and two others with endangering national security. How do you fit that into the context of what happened in Baghdad today where -- or yesterday rather, with, you know, an outreach to Iran and to a certain extent their reaching back?

And from the Iranian perspective, why shouldn't they sort of equate the seizure of the Americans with the American seizure of Iranians in Iraq?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the two are wholly unconnected. First of all, in terms of the talks yesterday, very much limited to security in Iraq, something very much championed by the Iraqi leadership that for its own very good reasons would like to see everybody contributing to a more stable environment in Iraq. And as Ryan Crocker said yesterday, the Iranians profess to have an interest in a stable Iraq, but their behavior is not moving in that direction. And so an opportunity to press forward on concerns about Iranian behavior in Iraq is one that I think the President and the Administration wanted to pursue.

The Iranians themselves have said that, you know, that this is a course they want to pursue, and we'll see what comes of it. But it's going to be about this behavior on the ground, and part of the concern for behavior on the ground was manifested in the fact that there's been some Iranian officials, Iranian personnel, picked up in Iraq engaged in activities that are not stabilizing and that endanger our forces. And that's going to continue.

Now, as to the people who have been -- the dual citizens who have been taken into custody in Iran, I think it is really just a perversion of the rule of law. These are people who are there trying to make life better in Iran. In the case of a couple of them there, they were there visiting their families. These are not people who are engaged in espionage. These are good citizens, dual citizens of the United States and Iran, and I would -- it would have been a good thing if Iran were able to welcome people who want to improve life for Iranian and improve freedoms in Iran. So the two are just simply not linked.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, it's been about a year now since the U.S. and Europe made Iran that P-5+1 offer, and they haven't accepted and we have this IAEA report last week now showing that they're getting ever closer to the magic 3,000 centrifuge mark. My question is: Do you have a red line and are you worried at all about whether or not the diplomatic strategy is going to be effective before you reach that red line?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, you should know, and perhaps you do know, that Javier Solana is going to meet again with Larijani at the end of the month, and he will restate again the interest of the six in another course for Iran, a course that turns away from confrontation, contingent on Iran meeting the now multiple demands or multiple times that this demand for suspension has been made by the international community. And I think that's another opportunity for Iran to be compliant.

But the fact is that we still think the diplomatic course if the international community holds strong and within the Security Council, should Iran not choose the course that will be offered to them, that that is a course that will ultimately have an effect on Iran's ability to carry out any number of activities that Iran wants to carry out in international politics and will increase its isolation.

Now, as I've said several times, we're not dependent just on the Security Council track. The financial measures that are being taken against Iran, in part because some countries have decided to enhance the Security Council measures, in part because private concerns are reacting to both the reputational and investment risk that is associated with Iran under Chapter 7, it's having an effect on the Iranian economy -- that and the mismanagement of the Iranian President of that economy.

And I am not one who agrees that somehow because the Iranians are continuing to make progress or are purported to continue to make progress on certain kinds of technologies, that it's time to abandon the requirement that they suspend. I think that would be a very big mistake. You have to remember that we're talking about an engineering problem when you talk about enrichment and reprocessing, and it's something you need to practice. And so doing it once or even doing it

a couple of times doesn't mean that you're capable of doing it in an extended period of time to do the sorts of things that you need to actually be able to enrich material.

So we are firm about the need to suspend. We are firm about the need to continue to increase the pressure. And we're firm that should Iran make a different choice, we're prepared to go that way as well. And as to red lines, you know I don't speak in those terms.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, if you are firm about the measures you are ready to take, what kind of other sanctions do you envision? Would it be some economic sanctions or would be -- would it be really serious economic sanctions?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Sylvie, one of the things we'll do, and I think we will want to hear from Javier Solana after his meetings, is to assess where we think we are in terms of Iran's response to the May 31 meeting. We can then assess whether to simply continue and move up, tighten the sanctions that are already there or whether there are new categories that need to be considered. But again, I would remind everyone that there is the fact of the Security Council resolution, that's one; but the other is that there are things that can be done outside of the Security Council if we choose to do it.

**QUESTION:** Okay. On Russia, President Putin made some comments the other day that U.S. plans for missile defense and working with the Czechs and the Polish are in line with U.S. designs to surround Russia's borders. Do you make -- and they're also talking to the Europeans about revisiting some of the treaties on -- in their back yard. What do you think of the attitude by Russia that it feels like the U.S. is moving towards a cold war stance again?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, frankly, I don't see why a missile defense system that is clearly aimed at threats that we and the Russians share, by the way, threats from states that could launch missiles in the small numbers, would be considered something that is surrounding Russia. And I said it before; the idea that this somehow would degrade Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent is just ludicrous, and the Russians know it's ludicrous. There isn't any military person who can imagine this system with a few interceptors and a few sensors and a few radars able to intercept the Russian deterrent.

As to the location, the Czech Republic and Poland are independent countries. They are members of NATO. They are allies of the United States. And they will take decisions based on their own interests and those of their allies. We are also very determined that what we do in missile defense takes into account the indivisibility of the alliance as a whole, and that's a commitment that we've made to all of our European allies that they should be certain that we are not just concerned about the defense of the United States, we're concerned about the defense of Europe more broadly.

As to the CFE Treaty, it's a fundamental treaty, a basic treaty for security, a part of the security architecture in Europe that is duly accepted by Russia as the successor state to the Soviet Union. And the Russians have said they have some concerns. They would like to meet to address those concerns. I think in general that we would be quite happy to meet to discuss concerns, but we have to realize that it's a fundamental treaty and a lot of the European security architecture is based on it.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, regarding the final part of your trip in Spain, do you envisage any way in which your government and the Spanish Government could work together to promote democracy in Cuba?

**SECRETARY RICE:** That will be one of the fundamental issues that I want to address when I'm in Spain because Spain is a NATO ally and we're working well together on Afghanistan. Spain has been helpful on a number of issues.

On Cuba, I'm not sure we see eye to eye, quite frankly. I'm not sure that we see eye to eye on Cuba. I'm sure we see eye to eye for the need for democracy in Cuba because especially a country like Spain that has been able to overcome its own authoritarian past and a country like Spain that has been able to therefore have democracy and freedom for its people, I certainly would hope and believe would understand that the Cuban people deserve the same thing.

But I don't see how that course is advanced by simply dealing with the current regime, a regime that seems to be trying to set itself up for a non-democratic succession when the transition takes place in Cuba and doing that at the expense of contacts with the very nascent and fragile democratic opposition that is beginning to arise in Cuba. The Cubans deserve better and I think we will talk about that.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, two questions. You made a reference to Mohamed ElBaradei's comments that Iran -- just because they're making progress on enrichment doesn't mean they should abandon suspension, it seems. Does this mean you are dissatisfied with the clarification the U.S. sought from them? And since you're going to be in Vienna, why not stop in and chat with them to clear this up?

And I'm also, second, just curious whether -- when you're meeting with G-8 foreign ministers if you're going to explain President Bush's -- what he outlined as a new approach in Iraq for the U.S. military, are you going to talk to them about that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, on Iraq, I think the thing to remember is that we're in the phase right now of completing the deployment of the forces for the surge, pushing forward on the reconciliation and on economic reconstruction. Obviously, there will come a time when the surge has been completed and when its benefits have been seen that, you know, you need to think about what comes next. But that's a future issue.

Right now, everybody is very focused on making this work, and that's what I'll say. And I think the Europeans want to see it work so I don't -- and I -- Iraq -- I really intend to talk more in the context of what we achieved at Sharm el-Sheikh, what could be done to support the Iraqi Government, perhaps to read out a little bit our views of the contact that Ryan had with his Iranian counterparts. That sort of thing.

As to the ElBaradei comments, look, I -- the key here is that the IAEA is not an agency that is negotiating with the Iranians. That's being done under Security Council resolutions by six states and I just think it's appropriate for those six states to determine what the diplomatic course ought to be.

**QUESTION:** (Off-mike.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** There just isn't time, but I talk to ElBaradei all the time. I see him when he comes to Washington. We talk on the phone. There's no absence of contact.

**QUESTION:** I have two sanctions questions. Number one, on Iran, do you think it's time to start looking at the oil and

gas sector and whether you should target those? And secondly, the President, in his speech or in his announcement today on Sudan and new sanctions, said that you were going to be approaching the United Kingdom for a new resolution. And you mentioned this in your G-8 comments. What are you going to be speaking to the G-8 about when it comes to Darfur and putting more pressure on the Sudanese Government?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, on the first point, I think we just need to look, as I said, at -- so the question is, do we stay within the context and tighten the sanctions in the areas that we are currently operating in or do we start to look outside of that.

I just might note that you don't have to have sanctions through the UN Security Council to have an effect on the oil and gas industry if investment is in -- is impacted, if the ability to do certain kinds of transactions in the international financial system is impacted. Those are impacts in their own right, but we'll examine the full range and see what we think is appropriate. I've always thought that the financial measures are actually more -- the collateral effects here are probably more important than almost anything else and so we'll see how some of those are affecting the industry.

In terms of Sudan and Darfur, the President's remarks today issuing or imposing certain unilateral sanctions and directing me to begin to work toward another Security Council action really means that it's -- that we believe that the diplomacy has got to succeed and succeed soon that the UN Secretary-General is undertaking. He's done a really fine job. I think he's made some progress. We're going to be looking very closely at meetings that he -- his people are going to be having with the Sudanese, I think, in about two weeks. And the Sudanese need to be completely and totally responsive to what he suggests and what the AU and the UN have worked out. But yes, I'm going to start -- we're going to start talking about what kind of Security Council resolution we might pursue.

**QUESTION:** With the sanctions or with the resolution that you're going to be looking at for (inaudible), would that cover a no-fly zone? Is that what that's going to be looking at or is it looking at more sanctions?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Again, we're open to discussions at this point. What we're doing at this point is talking to people. Before you go and -- before we go and write a resolution or call for specific sanctions, I think we want to have some consultations and I can start those today and we'll have -- we'll continue them.

**QUESTION:** The U.S. hasn't had good relations with Spain since Aznar left government and Zapatero took over. Are you viewing your trip to Spain as an opportunity to rebuild bridges with the Spanish Government? And secondly, on Russia, Russia's position on Kosovo is opposite to that of the United States. What kind of conversations have you been having with the Russians about that and what can we expect you to say?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, a good deal of the discussion on Kosovo is going on at the UN between Zal Khalilzad and Churkin -- Ambassador Churkin. And those discussions are going to continue. We have the resolution for Lebanon coming up, we think, in very few days here. And then I think the discussions are really going to begin in earnest on Kosovo. They've been going on, but we're going to have to really come to a sense of what is going to be in that resolution.

We have said to the Russians that we're prepared to look at their ideas. President Bush told President Putin yesterday that he would hope that Ambassador Churkin would engage more fully with Zal Khalilzad about what concerns they have and how they -- both concerns might be met and that I'm prepared to talk to Sergey Lavrov today or tomorrow about

those concerns.

But the bottom line is that there is broad support, particularly in Europe, for the Ahtisaari report, for the implications of that report for Kosovo's status for independence, lots of work to be done about minority rights, about protection of minority rights, about refugees, about how Kosovo would be transitioned into the international system. All of those things, I think, are still worth talking about.

But the basic underlying point is that it's time to recognize the very fact that Ahtisaari has done as much as he can possibly do and that I think any negotiator could do on dealing with the status issue and we're going to have to act on it.

**STAFF:** Okay. Thanks, everybody.

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