



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

KEYWORD SEARCH

[Subject Index](#)+ BOOKMARK    ...[Home](#)[Issues & Press](#)[Travel & Business](#)[Countries](#)[Youth & Education](#)[Careers](#)[About State](#)

You are in: [Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice](#) > [What the Secretary Has Been Saying](#) > [2008 Secretary Rice's Remarks](#) > [July 2008: Secretary Rice's Remarks](#)

## Remarks At the Civilian Response Corps Rollout

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

East Auditorium  
Washington, DC  
July 16, 2008

[View Video](#)

(1:30 p.m. EST)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you, Henrietta, for that very kind introduction. And I especially want to thank Ambassador John Herbst and his team for the excellent work.

I'd also like to thank distinguished member of Congress – I think, Congressman Farr -- I know you were here – there he is. Thank you very much for being here and for your extremely important support of this initiative.

And I want very much to recognize again our civilian partners from across the United States Government.

Honored ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you very much for joining us here for the launch of this very important institutional innovation for the United States of America. In the past two decades, the United States and our friends and allies have learned that one of the defining challenges in our world, now and for many years to come, will be to deal with weak and poorly governed states – states that are on the verge of failure, or indeed, states that have already failed. These crises create environments of anarchy, and conflict, and ungoverned space – where violence and oppression can spread; where arms traffickers and other transnational criminals can operate with impunity; and where terrorists and extremists can gather, and plot, and train to kill the innocent.

In a world as increasingly interconnected as ours, the international state system is only as strong as its weakest

links. We cannot afford another situation like the one that emerged in 2001 in Afghanistan.

And yet, supporting leaders and citizens who seek to rebuild after conflict, to strengthen their state institutions, or at times even to build new institutions of governance that are effective, legitimate, and accountable to their people – often in a state not totally at war nor totally at peace, but where there is a continuum between war and peace – this is a mission that requires the integration of security, diplomacy, and development.

In short, stabilization and reconstruction is a mission that civilians must lead. But for too long, our civilians have not had the capacity to lead, and investments were not made to prepare them to lead. As a result, over the past 20 years, over the course of 17 significant stabilization and reconstruction missions in which the United States has been involved, too much of the effort has been borne by our men and women in uniform.

Today, it is clear that managing the problems of state failure and ungoverned spaces will be a feature of U.S. foreign policy for the foreseeable future – whether we like it or not. So we must be prepared. We must invest in and build the civilian institutions to succeed in stabilization and reconstruction missions, to empower our civilians to play their part, to enable them to work better with our international partners, and to ensure that the burden on our troops is no greater than it has to be.

This is a challenge that we have been wrestling with for the past several years – in places like Haiti and Kosovo, and Sudan and Liberia, and of course, in Afghanistan and Iraq. In these two countries, Afghanistan and Iraq, we have tried two different approaches to stabilization and reconstruction – both of which have had strengths and significant weaknesses. One was in Afghanistan, where many countries adopted elements of the effort to build Afghan capacity. These were welcome efforts, but I have to tell you, we are still living with some of the incoherence of that effort today. Another approach was taken in Iraq where a single U.S. government department, the Department of Defense, found it difficult to harness the full range of our capabilities to conduct development and reconstruction in the counterinsurgency environment. The truth is, no single institution of the U.S. Government can perform this mission alone.

This is why President Bush and I proposed the Civilian Stabilization Initiative, for which the President requested nearly \$249 million of funding in his Fiscal Year 2009 budget. A vital part of this Initiative is the Civilian Response Corps, which as we envision it, has three parts:

First, an “Active” component of the Civilian Response Corps, made up of 250 civilian experts who could deploy rapidly to the scene of a crisis. These individuals would coordinate a “whole of government” effort to support foreign leaders and citizens in stabilizing and rebuilding their states – and, if possible, to prevent conflict and state failure from taking place in the first place.

In addition to these first responders, we also seek to train up to 2,000 “Standby” members of the Civilian Response Corps. These are regular federal employees: doctors and lawyers, engineers and agronomists, police officers and public administrators, men and women whose skills are vital to the success of stabilization and reconstruction missions, and who would volunteer for additional training and be available in the event of a crisis.

Finally, as President Bush has called for, we seek to create a cadre of private citizen experts – a Reserve component of the Civilian Response Corps – that could contribute to stabilization and reconstruction missions.

The mission of the Civilian Response Corps is this: To build more effective partnerships among our government's many civilian departments and agencies, among our civilian and military institutions, together with our many friends and allies abroad, and perhaps most importantly, with foreign leaders and citizens whose countries are in crisis, or approaching crisis, and who want and need our support. Ultimately, our goal is to enable countries in crisis to transition as quickly as possible to governing themselves, sustaining themselves, and securing themselves – without U.S. or international assistance.

We are here today because Congress has appropriated funding in the 2008 Supplemental that will enable us to begin standing up the Civilian Response Corps. Members of Congress were critical in helping to bring us to this day, and I want to thank them for their support:

I want to thank especially members of the Appropriations Committees – Chairwoman Nita Lowey, Representative Frank Wolf, Chairman Frank – Chairman Patrick Leahy, and Senator Judd Gregg. I want to thank the lead sponsors of the pending authorizing legislation, Chairman Joe Biden and Senator Richard Lugar, and in the House, Representative Sam Farr and Representative Saxton. Let me also thank Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Ike Skelton, and Subcommittee Chair Vic Snyder. And finally, let me thank Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Howard Berman, and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ladies and gentlemen, by creating the Civilian Response Corps, we are better preparing our country to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – challenges that call for a new generation of American civilians to step forward and serve. Many already are, and they fill our ranks here at the Department, at USAID, and at the other civilian agencies of our government. They are doing demanding, noble work, often under trying conditions, often in partnership with our men and women in uniform, and our entire nation is grateful for their service and their sacrifice.

Now we hope that other Americans will step forward, too. To the prosecutor in Phoenix who wants to help a fragile state build a new and better system of justice, to the police officer in Philadelphia who wants to help a nation with a history of conflict build a future of law and order, to the agricultural expert in Des Moines who wants to help foreign farmers launch new green revolutions in the world's poorest countries, to all of these people, and more – the Civilian Response Corps will be a chance to serve. This will be your chance to contribute to our country's security and to a more just and stable world. This will be the chance of Americans, and I hope they will choose to join us.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

**2008/587**

Released on July 16, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)



[Updates](#) | [Frequent Questions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[About state.gov](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Other U.S. Government Information](#)