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## President's FY 2007 International Affairs Budget Request

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Opening Remarks Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Washington, DC  
February 15, 2006

[As Delivered]

(9:50 a.m. EST)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, Senator Hagel, other Senators. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address you. I have a longer [written statement](#) which I would like to enter into the record but I will not go through that statement so that we can maximize time for questions.

Mr. Chairman, it's been a little over a year since I was confirmed by this committee as Secretary of State and obviously a lot has happened in that year. The President's Budget this year is in support of a foreign policy that is devoted to the creation of a more hospitable environment for the forward march of freedom and democracy. Democratic processes must be supported around the world. These are transitional periods in some parts of the world, like the Middle East, and the democratic transitions are indeed difficult. But people have to have their voice and the United States must stand for a principle that democratic processes, no matter how difficult, are always preferable to the false stability of dictatorship.

You will notice that this year the President is requesting funding for Iraq and Afghanistan where young democracies are trying to make their way towards stability. I will talk later perhaps in questions about developments in the Middle East, in particular the Palestinian elections. And let me just say that the United States does want to congratulate the Palestinian people on having held an election that was largely free of violence and largely believed to be free and fair. The Palestinian people voted for change. We believe that they voted for change against long-term corrupt practices that had made their lives difficult and their progress difficult. But we believe that the change that they -- that what has not changed is the Palestinian people's desire to have a freer and a better life.

And in that regard Hamas, which won that election, now has both an obligation and a choice. It has an obligation to fulfill the Palestinian people's desire for a better life. That better life can only be achieved in a peaceful environment which



can only be achieved with a two-state solution, and so Hamas is being confronted with a choice by the international community. I think the Quartet statement speaks to that choice that Hamas must recognize the right of Israel to exist, disarm as a militia, and renounce violence. Because only under those circumstances can there be true international support for the next Palestinian government.

We recognize also that other major challenges have arisen this year. In particular, I would like to speak briefly to the Iranian problem, the Iranian regime with its destabilizing policies; throughout the region, policies that support terrorism and violent extremism. The Iranian regime uses those tools to further ideological ambitions and policies that are, frankly, a challenge to the kind of Middle East that I think we would all like to see, one of tolerance, one of democracy.

The United States will actively confront the aggressive policies of this Iranian regime. And at the same time, we are going to work to support the aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom in their own country.

The Iranian regime is now deepening its own international isolation through toxic statements and confrontational behavior, most especially in its pursuit of nuclear weapons and pursuit of policies that are now being roundly condemned by the international community.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to note that no one wants to deny the Iranian people or the Iranian nation civil nuclear power. Many different options have been put before Iran. They have chosen to isolate themselves instead. And in a year of peaceful and patient efforts, the United States has broadened the diplomatic consensus on the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. We've successfully convinced Russia and China and India and Brazil and Egypt and many others to send the issue to the Security Council.

The community of nations is, as I said, not debating whether Iran should have civil nuclear power, but how to safely do so without a proliferation risk. We must now expand the international consensus on the Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions to address the full scope of its threatening policies. In conjunction with our multilateral diplomacy, the United States will develop sensible measures, security measures, including looking further at our Proliferation Security Initiative and those who cooperate with us to try and deny to regimes like Iran, North Korea and others the materials for covert programs that threaten the international system. At the same time, we are going to begin a new effort to support the aspirations of the Iranian people.

I want to thank the Congress for giving us \$10 million to support the cause of freedom and human rights in Iran this year. We will use this money to develop support networks for Iranian reformers, political dissidents and human rights activists. We also plan to request \$75 million in supplemental funding for the year 2006 to support democracy in Iran. That money would enable us to increase our support for democracy and improve our radio broadcasting, begin satellite television broadcasts, increase the contacts between our peoples through expanded fellowships and scholarships for Iranian students, and to bolster our public diplomacy efforts.

In addition, I will be notifying that we plan to reprogram funds in 2007 to support the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people.

Now, I'm sure that the members of the committee know that going forward with this effort requires that we remove obstacles that hinder our ability to support those courageous Iranians working for their country's freedom, so we are working with the Treasury Department to overcome U.S. regulatory restrictions to allow the U.S. Government to make grants to nongovernmental organizations for democracy promotion activities in Iran.

We want to expand our educational exchanges with the young people of Iran who have never experienced democracy. In the 1970s, 200,000 Iranians studied in the United States. That figure is 2,000 today. We must change this and we will and we are beginning a new effort to dramatically increase the number of Iranians who can come to study in America, the number of Iranian professionals who wish to visit. I've said on a number of occasions that I've read that it is forbidden in some quarters to play Beethoven and Mozart in Tehran; we hope that Iranians can play it in New York or in Los Angeles.

Finally, let me just say, Mr. Chairman, that Senator Biden kindly mentioned the efforts that we're making in the Department to transform our workforce, to transform the men and women -- the skills and tools of the men and women of the State Department who must lead our transformational diplomacy. We have repositioned 100 Foreign Service and other positions. There will be more. Because we feel that the presence needs to match the global challenges.

We have also undertaken, within the limits of my authority, a reform of foreign assistance so that we can get better alignment between USAID and State so that we can be better stewards of the American people's money. I want to be very clear that America will always care for and will always try to serve the most vulnerable populations with humanitarian assistance and with help for child welfare and with assistance to disaster relief when necessary. It is also our goal to make our foreign assistance something that is not permanent for countries as they transition to well-managed countries that fight corruption, that govern wisely, that make investments in their people, and so one of our goals is to make certain that we are serving also the objective of the creation of well-governed democratic states that, on their own, can attract foreign investment, attract trade and begin to move away from foreign assistance.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am now happy to take questions.

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