



## Interview with Novaya Gazeta's Editor-in-Chief Dmitriy Muratov, Deputy Editor Andrey Lipskiy, Ilya Politkovskiy, and Reporter Zoya Yaroshok

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Moscow, Russia  
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**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** It's good to see all of you and once again not only convey my own sympathies but also introduce Secretary Rice and Sean McCormack, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Madame Secretary, it's terrific to have you here and thank you very much.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. First let me say that I am very much saddened, as was the entire world, by the brutal murder of Anna Politkovskaya. She was a heroine to many people.



She stood for what is best in independent journalism, a willingness to try to get to the truth at whatever cost. And if I may just say to you, Ilya, that while I know the world has lost someone who was a symbol, you have lost your mother and we are very saddened by that. But her work goes on, and Novaya Gazeta is a fine publication that I think represents a very good independent voice here in Russia.

The role of the independent press is extremely important in society, particularly for democratic development. And it's important not just because it is an important value to have an independent press, although it is one of the most important values of democracy. But it also is important to the proper functioning of government in democracy.

People need information in order to hold their government accountable. And only through an independent press can that information be developed and communicated. And whether it is in fighting corruption or questioning government policies or communicating to the government the concerns of people, an independent press plays an extremely important role.

I want to encourage you to keep working. It is extremely important work, and we are very supportive of the role of independent media here in Russia. We know it has not been easy, but it is an important path -- an important road -- even if it's not an easy one.

I am happy to take your questions or listen to any comments that you might have.

**DMITRIY MURATOV:** Indeed we must continue the work of Anna. However, in the course of the last six years, this is the third such tragic death at Novaya Gazeta. [Igor] Domnikov was murdered by professional killers, and now his assassins are in court. He was killed because of his professional activity. It was a corrupt official -- a deputy governor of one of the regions of Russia -- who actually ordered his assassination.

There was another mysterious death three years ago as well, when our deputy editor in chief who was also a Duma deputy [Yuri] Shchekochikhin was killed while working on a commission investigating corruption. His assassins have not been found. Now Anna [Politkovskaya] has been murdered. The people who killed her first followed her and watched her for a long time. They knew exactly when she would return after visiting her sick mother, and they knew that a week before she had buried her father. So when I learned of her assassination, I wondered how human beings could even sink that low.

I need to ask a purely human question: Is the price we pay for the right to engage in our professional duties as journalists not too high?

**SECRETARY RICE:** You have recalled for us a very sad history of the last six years and one with which I am familiar. There have been many tragedies for Novaya Gazeta, and you must feel it very personally. We have told the Russian Government that these murders and the murders of other journalists must be thoroughly investigated and people must begin to understand that those who have done this will pay the price.

It's hard for me to answer your question because I know these have been great personal losses. It's difficult to step back and give an abstract answer to a very personal human question. But I think that if you look at history and struggles in many different countries under many different historical circumstances, there have been people who sacrificed on the basis of principle, people who sacrificed for a cause and those sacrifices are never in vain because ultimately freedom will win out.

In particular, investigative journalists are very often in danger because by their very nature they expose the truth. Very often they run afoul of those who have a lot at stake and a lot to lose if the truth comes out. I recognize that it's a very dangerous profession, but without investigative journalists who are willing to seek the truth, it's very hard for a democracy to function.

If it is any comfort at all -- at a personal level I'm sure that it's not-- at a professional level if it is any comfort you should know that these murders have received worldwide attention. People are watching. People are pressing for a full investigation and for punishment of those who have committed these crimes. You are not alone in your struggle.

**QUESTION:** How important is it for a politician to have feelings and emotions? I'm talking about feelings of kindness and openness.

**SECRETARY RICE:** It is important for people who are engaged in politics to have human emotions, compassion, and most importantly to have principles. I watch very carefully the influence and tremendous effect that political leaders can have on the lives of ordinary people, and they need to be people who understand their impact.

It's very important for politicians, particularly in democratic societies, not to lose touch with the people that they represent. Even the President of the United States leaves the White House and visits with school children, or goes to a retirement home and sees the effects of our policies on older people. I think it's very important for politicians, and I know that when the President does this it has a big effect on him.

Ultimately I think a politician has to lead people and not be led by them, and that very often means making difficult, sometimes unpopular decisions. People expect their leaders to do exactly that. If the job were only to make easy decisions, anyone could do it. Because it's often a matter of difficult decisions, I think it takes a very special person to be a politician in a democracy. I admire very much our people who have entered political life. I admire people who want to serve their country in that way. It's not easy because you're very often making difficult, unpopular decisions for the good of a large number of people.

**QUESTION:** So politics is not just a form of business?

**SECRETARY RICE:** No, it's not. It's a form of service. [Politicians have] different values than those who go into other professions.

**QUESTION:** It's part of the service sector?

**SECRETARY RICE:** No, it's a form of public service.

**MURATOV:** I read a study by Reporters Without Borders [the Worldwide Press Freedom Index for 2005] that placed Press Freedom in Russia in 138th place. However, the United States is in 137th place for Press Freedom in Iraq. Is this due to self-censorship or is it government policy?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It's certainly not government policy. But I'll tell you something, I watch our reporting on Iraq every day, and our reporters in Iraq are very tough on the U.S. Government. It was the American press that exposed the very bad events at Abu Ghraib. That came out first in the American press. I don't know what study you're talking about, but the U.S. press reports exactly what they think, and they try to do it accurately. With press reporting -- with freedom of the press-- goes responsibility. It's not just reporting anything you hear or anything someone tells you. The American press tries to be accurate in what they are reporting, but they report in the very toughest of circumstances.

There is one circumstance that sometimes the American press will not report: if it is going to put our soldiers in danger. Then they may decide that they do not want to report on something that might cost American soldiers their lives. That's another part of press responsibility. The government can't force *The New York Times* not to print something, but *The New York Times* can decide if something is potentially dangerous to the lives of American soldiers and not print it.

**QUESTION:** Moscow is the tail end of a long and difficult trip. Do you think there will be a second nuclear test? What should we do about the North Koreans? Should we start buying gas masks for the Russian Far East?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It has been a long trip, but it's been a very good trip because I was able to see the strong cohesion, the strong unity of the international system in opposing what North Korea has done.

I have just talked with Sergey Lavrov and I will talk later with President Putin. The most important thing now is that we need to implement fully the Security Council resolution that we have passed so that we can deal with the risks associated with the North Korean program. I don't know if North Korea will test again. They crossed a line in the international system when they tested the first time. I don't know if they will test again. But if they were to test again, they would only deepen their own isolation because I think there would be even another response, a greater response if they tested again.

The most important goal now must be to get North Korea to dismantle the nuclear program that it has. We have an agreement from last September in the context of the six-party talks about how to get the dismantlement of the North Korean program, and we need to implement that. But you're right, it's a very dangerous situation, and the international community needs to be serious in its response to North Korea and to show North Korea that it really has no other option but to dismantle its nuclear program if it wishes to receive any benefits from the international system.

**QUESTION:** What about gas masks?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Not yet.

**DMITRIY MURATOV:** [Gives the Secretary a business card of Anna Politkovskaya's] This was hers.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you, I'll keep it as a good memory.

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