



Remarks to the Press in China

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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(1:10 PM Local)

SECRETARY RICE: Good afternoon. It's been great to be back in Beijing and I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with China's leaders, but also to attend a very moving church service yesterday evening and to spend some very nice quality time with a group of students out at Beijing University, several of whom noted that the universities have had a very good relationship with Stanford University, and so that was a very pleasant experience.

U.S.-China relations have developed remarkably and in ways that would have been thought unthinkable a few years ago. Today we are cooperating in tangible ways on issues ranging from aid to Afghanistan and Iraq to actions in the global war on terror to concerns in fighting HIV/AIDS.

During our meetings here my Chinese hosts and I agreed that expanded cooperation between the United States and China is essential to the interests of both countries, particularly as China is in a stage of major transformation. I extended the President's greetings to President Hu and noted that the President is looking forward to welcoming him to the United States later this year.

We discussed North Korea and the Six-Party Talks and reiterated our joint commitment to a diplomatic resolution of this nuclear issue. We talked about the important role of all of the members of the Six-Party Talks, but China, in particular, has an important role to play in convincing North Korea that the best way for it to seek improved relations with the rest of the world is to return to the negotiating table and end its nuclear ambitions.

I raised with my interlocutors the issues of human rights and religious freedom, talked about the possibilities for increased participation in the political process and the extension of personal freedoms for Chinese citizens and how essential that is to the success of countries in the 21st century.

Of course we talked about Taiwan and Cross-Strait differences and the importance of neither side doing anything to -- unilaterally that would increase tensions across the Cross-Strait.

I reiterated that the United States does, in fact, have a "One China" policy that has been clear and consistent, a policy that is based on three communiqués but that also recognizes American obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act.

As for the anti-secession legislation, I said to my Chinese hosts that we would hope that this would be something that having, we believe, made dialogue across the Cross-Straits perhaps more difficult, that they would take steps to reduce tensions now with Taiwan.

As the United States works with a rapidly developing China we want to do so honestly and on the basis of global standards. These standards are important in areas like human rights and nonproliferation and of course they are important in trade and economic affairs. On that basis and on the basis of shared interests we look forward to an expanding and deepening relationship with China.

And now Richard will point out questions.

MR. BOUCHER: Can we start with the Associated Press?

QUESTION: You said you raised human rights concerns today. Can you be more specific, describe what the United States views as -- what the United States view is on Chinese human rights and on religious freedom? We note you went to church last night but chose to do so at a state-sponsored church. You might have gone elsewhere and you also might have met with dissidents while here. What message are you sending in those actions?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, first of all, on human rights I made clear in raising a number of individual cases, as we always do, as well as some of the structural issues about human rights in China, that while we have seen some progress over the last few months that we expect that progress to continue, that the United States hopes that there will be improved relations in religious freedom with the Catholic Church, with the Dalai Lama's representatives, so that Tibetans can freely pursue their cultural interests. We also talked a good deal about the need for China to think about a more open political system that will match its economic openness and allow for the full creativity of the Chinese people.

I did indeed go to church last night and it was indeed a church that was legal. I don't think there was any doubt about the believers who were there and about their commitment to their religion. It was an extraordinary experience for me. It was a quite moving experience. But it underscored for me that people must have an opportunity to exercise their religious beliefs, to exercise their religious traditions, to do so in an atmosphere that is free of intimidation, that in fact allows for the expansion of religion and communities of believers. I made that point to my counterpart, Mr. Li, and to others, and I do hope that there is an understanding that religious communities are not a threat to transitioning societies; in fact, they are very often in societies that are changing a force for good, for stability and for compassion in societies that are undergoing rapid change. I also made that point.

I think my commitment to religious freedom is well understood in this country and worldwide, and I said to Minister Li that, to my mind, this was not just something that I raise when I come to China or when he comes to the United States, but is something that we have to work on every day because I noted that the United States was, of course, founded by people who were fleeing religious persecution, many of them, and that this is a deeply held value for the United States of America, for the American people, and that it will continue to be a major issue in U.S.-China relations.

MR. BOUCHER: I think we have Xinhua.

QUESTION: I'm from Xinhua News Agency. Since you have talked with Chinese leaders on the Six-Party Talks, now do you think that there is a hope for restarting the talks at an early date?



SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Well, whether the talks can restart, of course, depends on North Korea. Everyone is ready to restart the talks. Everyone is ready to restart the talks in a spirit of constructive discussion.

There is a lot on the table for North Korea. We have said that North Korea is, of course, a sovereign country. We have said that we don't have any intention to attack or invade North Korea, something that, by the way, was said by the President, by Secretary Powell, by myself. We have said that the North Koreans -- we are prepared to think about their energy needs and to try to move forward on that and a number of countries in the Six-Party Talks are prepared to supply them with fuel. So there is a lot that is at stake here and we would hope that the North Koreans understand that this is the way for them to get the assistance that they need and the respect that they seem to desire.

Now, China -- one reason that it was important to talk with the Chinese leadership about this is that China has the closest relationship with North Korea, and China and the United States have made clear their commitment at the level of President Hu and President Bush to a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula. But the fact of the matter is the North has not yet demonstrated a willingness or a determination to make the non-nuclear Korean Peninsula a reality, and so it is incumbent on everyone to make very clear that this really is the only way that the North is going to achieve its aims.

MR. BOUCHER: Let's go to the *Washington Times*.

QUESTION: Nicholas Kravlev with the *Washington Times*. Madam Secretary, we were told last night that you are already discussing with Japan and South Korea and even China what might happen if North Korea doesn't come back to the negotiating table. Isn't it a bit early at this point to talk about this and what other diplomatic means are there to resolve the issue?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we at this point are committed to the Six-Party Talks because we really do believe that that's the best way to resolve this issue. It is a framework in which we can bring the neighbors together, each of them with different incentives and different points of leverage with North Korea, to resolve the problem so that it's not, as North Korea would like to make it, a U.S.-North Korean issue. It is not a U.S.-North Korean issue. After all, a nuclear North Korea on the Korean Peninsula would be a problem for South Korea, Japan, Russia, China, the United States and for the rest of the world, and so we're determined that this is going to be done in a multilateral context.

Of course, if we cannot find a way to resolve the North Korean issue in this way, then we will have to find other means to do it. That goes without saying. But most of my conversation here, indeed the very strong emphasis of the conversation, was to determine how we could, each in our way, but particularly China, make very clear to the North Koreans that the time has come for them to return to the talks, and not just return to the talks but return to the talks in a spirit -- a constructive spirit-- that demonstrates that they really are ready to make a strategic choice about their programs.

QUESTION: Thank you. You said -- you opened it up with the "One China" policy yesterday, but I didn't hear the formal comments about the anti-secession law of China. Can I hear these formal comments today? And what about the U.S. comment for this law? Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Well, we've made very clear that the anti-secession law was not a welcome development because anything that is unilateral in this and that increases tensions, which clearly the anti-secession law did increase tensions, is not good. China and Taiwan are not going to be able to resolve this alone. They are going to eventually need each other to resolve this. And so, while we remain absolutely committed to a "One China" policy, we also recognize that the most useful path ahead at this point would be to have means that reduce tensions between the two sides.

And I did talk to my Chinese counterparts about trying, hopefully taking measures in the wake of this anti-secession law, taking measures that would demonstrate a willingness to reduce tensions in the Cross-Strait environment.

We are not pleased when either side does anything unilaterally to either try to change the status quo or to increase tensions, and it's in that context that we commented about the anti-secession law.

MR. BOUCHER: Let's go to the BBC right here.

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, you raised concerns about China's military buildup before this visit. I just wondered, did you raise this issue with the Chinese? Did you talk about the EU arms embargo? And do you welcome an apparent change of hearts in some European Union countries because of the concerns on Taiwan?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I did raise this with the Chinese about the military balance. We did not talk about the EU arms embargo. I think our views of that are well known and, after all, it's a EU decision what to do about that embargo. We've also made our views pretty well known to the Europeans about this.

What has just happened in terms of the anti-secession law just demonstrates the unsettled nature of some of the relationships between China and others in the region, and as a result of that I think drives home the point that in a region that is undergoing this much change and that is adjusting to a new Chinese role that introducing a factor like the lifting of the embargo is probably not, from our point of view, a wise course.

I've heard the comments of Foreign Secretary Straw earlier today and I think that they were sobering comments, but obviously it's going to be an EU decision as to what they do from here. From the American point of view, and I think I heard it also from others in this region, from Japan and from South Korea, the lifting of an arms embargo at this time -- continuing human rights concerns but also continuing concerns about the military balance -- would not be the right signal, and perhaps more importantly it might actually serve to alter the military balance in a place where the United States, in particular, has very strong security interests because, after all, it is American forces here in the Pacific that has played the role of security guarantor.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, we've got time for two more, I think. We'll do the gentleman here in the third row.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Larry Fund (phonetic) of *China Business News*. I'd like to ask you what do you think is the biggest obstacles in terms of U.S.-China trade relationship? What is your suggestion or what is your formula of solution for the trade deficit between the U.S. and China?

And also about the timing of your visit, you didn't come to China at all during your service as the National Security Advisor in the -- during the --

SECRETARY RICE: You've forgotten, I did. I did. Actually, I was here in July. Yes, I did.

QUESTION: Oh, sorry for that. But anyway -- (laughter) --

SECRETARY RICE: It's easy to forget. I know, it's been a long time. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: It is a long time.

SECRETARY RICE: Yeah.

QUESTION: About the timing, again, you didn't come to China immediately after you were getting into the office as the Secretary of State. You went to Europe first --

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: -- and went to Asia second. But you said in another occasion that the U.S. is becoming a Pacific country. How do you explain that? Thank you very much.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Well, on the timing of the trip, now, as Secretary of State for I think less than two months, Bill, although I have to go back and look at the exact date, I obviously wanted to go out to some of our most important relationships. I did that in Europe. I've now been able to do that here in Asia.

The United States, of course, is global in its interests and in its reach, but I think I had a chance here to underscore how important the relations are to us here in Asia, in Japan, in South Korea, several days ago in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and then here in China where this relationship, like China itself, is in the midst of transformation. And that means that we do have to have very close contact and frequent contact as we deal with the many issues before us.

On the trade relations, for instance, I explained to my Chinese colleagues that China's very rapid economic growth and its obvious impact on the international economy is something that everybody is watching and that everybody is concerned about, not because it has to be a negative factor -- in fact, we have a view of the international economy that the more growth, the better, by everyone's economy -- and so we think it's a positive factor that the Chinese economy is growing.

It is growing so rapidly, though, and having such an impact that people want to be assured that it is going to be encapsulated in a rules-based approach to the international economy. That is why the United States supported Chinese accession to the WTO. It is why we have had extensive discussions about the need to protect intellectual property rights. It is why we have had extensive discussions in our JCCT mechanisms to talk about the issues of currency, the currency here and the desire for a flexible and market-rate floating currency. It is why it has been important to look at the trade imbalances and to begin to address them in structural terms.

So I spent a good deal of time here talking about the economy with Premier Wen, with Minister Wu earlier, and I am -- and of course with President Hu and with Minister Li. I just think that as we go forward and as the Chinese economy is becoming such a big factor it is really critical that people know that China is acting within the recognized rules of the international economy, that there is an understanding in China of the responsibility that comes with that kind of rapid economic growth, because it is going to have a big impact on everybody and on everybody's economy. I mentioned that in Mexico a couple of weeks ago that was one of the issues of interest, is what about China's economy and Mexico? So obviously it's having an impact on everybody and I would hope that China recognizes the responsibility that comes with that.

MR. BOUCHER: Okay, last question. How about we go way in the back, back there.

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, Barry Peterson from CBS News. You were quoted in Tokyo talking about North Korea this weekend saying, "We are committed to diplomacy but I think it goes without saying that" -- let me change the page here -- "no one is going to be prepared to allow the North Koreans to just go down a road that threatens everyone." That suggests to me that at some point the ability or your patience with diplomacy will wear out. I'm wondering when that time limit might be. It also suggests that you're exploring other options, like the military option, and I'm wondering if these discussions have been held with other members of the Six-Party Talks so far. Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: My discussions here were overwhelmingly devoted to trying to make the Six-Party mechanism, which we consider to be the reliable way to get this done, the best way to get this done, the discussions were devoted to how to make that work, how to not just get North Korea back to the table but get North Korea back to the table ready to be constructive. Because there is, after all, a proposal on the table. It is not as if the talks were somehow stalemated or in limbo. The United States and others put forward a proposal. We've not even heard a response to that proposal from the North. And so, we have devoted our energies to talking about what different parties can do to try and bring that about.

Now, it goes without saying that to the degree that a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula gets more difficult to achieve if the North does not recognize that it needs to that, then of course we'll have to look at other options because this is an issue of considerable concern for the United States, but not just for the United States but for every other state in this region. Again, I just want to repeat that North Korea would like to make this an issue between the United States and North Korea. The reason that the Six-Party Talks is an important framework is that it says in no uncertain terms to the North that they have a problem if they continue down this road not just with the United States but with Japan, with South Korea, with China and with Russia, not to mention the rest of the world, but in their neighborhood they're going to have a problem.

That's why the Six-Party framework is potentially so effective. But we did spend the great overwhelming bulk of our time here trying to figure out how to push it forward, how to make it work. Obviously, everybody is aware that there are other options in the international system.

Thank you.
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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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