



## Interview With Rick Nieman of RTL TV of the Netherlands

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**  
Luxembourg City, Luxembourg  
February 10, 2005

**QUESTION:** Ms Secretary, first of all, thank you very much for giving us the time to do this interview.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you, it's very nice to be with you.

**QUESTION:** I really appreciate it. Some really amazing news this morning, just out: North Korea has announced, for the first time publicly, that it has nuclear weapons. It has also said that it is pulling out of the six nation talks. What is your reaction to this?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well I've only recently seen the North Korean statement. Of course we will take a look at it, but if in fact this is the case, then the North Koreans are only deepening their isolation because everyone in the international community, and most especially North Korea's neighbors, have been very clear that there needs to be no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula in order to maintain stability in that region. We will consult with the other members of the six party talks – the Russians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the South Koreans- and talk about where we go next. But clearly, if this is the case, it's just another indication that the North Koreans are isolated.

**QUESTION:** Could you give us a view of what kind of steps you might be taking in response to this action?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I think we just have to first look at the statement, and then we have to talk with our allies. The North Koreans have no reason to believe that anyone wants to attack them. The president of the United States said in South Korea, that the United States has no intention to attack North Korea. They've been told they can have multilateral security assurances if they will make the important decision to give up their nuclear weapons program. So there is really no reason for this, but we'll examine where we will go next.

**QUESTION:** The North Koreans, one more on this issue if I may, have said that, and I'm quoting now, that the reason they are developing nuclear weapons- and indeed have said they have one – "is for self defense to cope with the Bush administration's ever more undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." And that what Mr. Bush has said in his inaugural speech is "akin to turning the world into a sea of war flames." This doesn't sound like someone who wants to talk to you about perhaps giving up nuclear weapons.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I'm not quite sure to what the North Koreans are referring, but obviously they have been given an opportunity by their closest neighbors to get on a different path with the international community. This is a state that has been isolated completely for its entire history. And they have been given a path. They have been told that if they simply make the decision that it is time to give up their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons program, to dismantle them verifiably and irreversibly, that there is a completely new path available to them. They have been told that they can have security assurances. They have been told that no one wants to attack them. So the North Koreans should reassess this and try to end their own isolation.

**QUESTION:** What do you think of their timing of this announcement? We have been talking about Iran developing a nuclear weapon. And now North Korea is basically saying to the whole world: look we've got one.

**SECRETARY RICE:** I would not presume to divine precisely what the North Koreans were thinking about their timing. I can only say they have another path available to them; it's been put there by the other members of the six-party talks, I'm sure it would be supported by the international community as a whole, and they really ought to take the opportunity before them to get on a different path.

**QUESTION:** And resume those talks?

**SECRETARY RICE:** And resume those talks.

**QUESTION:** Let's turn to another issue, if I may. Your trip to the Middle East and Europe, your first major trip, this is your tenth country in seven days, if I'm correct?

**SECRETARY RICE:** That's right

**QUESTION:** How do you look back on the trip?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It's been a great trip, and I've really enjoyed it. I've enjoyed it because this is a time when this alliance, this alliance which has such a wonderful past, is really charting its course for the future and is doing so on the basis of values which unite us: a common desire for the spread of freedom and liberty and also a common desire for the spread of prosperity and peace. The events in the Middle East have given us all hope that we might be on a path in which Israelis and Palestinians can move step by step toward their two-state future.

And no one underestimates the difficulties ahead, but we and the Europeans, the United States and the Europeans, are clearly united in how we move forward in encouraging the parties, in helping the Palestinians to get to the point that they can fight terrorism effectively, in supporting the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza and the four settlements in the West Bank and then trying to get back on the Roadmap. So that and the election in Iraq which I think reminded all of us of our own past in having to overcome tyranny, overcome fear, to be able to move forward toward liberty and peace. It's been a great time for this alliance to reflect on what it's going to do in the future.

**QUESTION:** You gave an important speech in Paris, which was very well received by many people, saying this is a diplomatic turn from the United States, focusing on joint values, we very much appreciate. Do you think you've been able to smooth over - or perhaps take away – some of the rather large irritation that these existed in Paris, but in other places in Europe as well, with the US administration in the past four years?

**SECRETARY RICE:** We understand that there have been differences in the past. And at the same time that those differences were so central to all of the discussion about the alliance, of course we were continuing to cooperate in places like Afghanistan, on terrorism, on law enforcement and intelligence sharing, on the proliferation security initiative which deals with weapons of mass destruction, the trade in cargo and on weapons of mass destruction.

So we've never stopped our cooperation, but that it was a difficult period. We, I think, have turned a page on that now because history is not going to judge us by the

disagreements that we had in the past, its going to judge us by whether of not we are successful in the future.

**QUESTION:** The French like to say – my French is not that great but - *C'est le temps qui fait la musique*. Is that perhaps also for you, as diplomacy is currently the case, a warmer, gentler approach?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the music is important, that's why I went to a music school [laughter]. I think it's important that we have a tone toward one another that recognizes and respects the fact that we are democracies, and democracies will debate and democracies will discuss, and sometimes they will not always agree. But we of course are the deepest of friends. We have a friendship that is based on shared sacrifice over the decades, shared victories in the end of imperial communism in Europe and the emergence of East-Central Europe as free and now a Europe whole and free, and I'm quite certain, shared achievements in the future. So tone is important, but so is substance. And I really do think that we will be moving substantively ahead on a very encouraging agenda

**QUESTION:** Some criticism, there was some criticism here in Europe as well as in the United States about some of the things President Bush has said in his Inaugural Address and his State of the Union. He has some really glowing words about spreading freedom and democracy around the world and obviously some people have said: well if at the same time you support – that's the United States – regimes such as those in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, how can you talk about spreading democracy? What would you say to those criticisms?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the President has been very clear that we expect from our friends also to move toward more openness in their political systems. This is going to happen at different speeds for different countries. But I would just note that Pakistan has come a long way from the Pakistan of three-and-a-half years ago where really there were links to extremism that were very dangerous; where the dangers of weapons of mass destruction and proliferation were being pursued, of course, on the kind of entrepreneurial market by AQ Khan; where Al Qaeda and the Taliban, the Taliban was really an ally of Pakistan. Pakistan has come a long way. General Musharraf has been working to try to reform the educational system and we want to be a partner in helpful in that.

And I just noted, this morning, that the Saudis have had their first municipal elections. It's a small step, but of course it's a step that we would hope at one point would include women. But these are places that are a part of a larger dialogue, now, a larger conversation, about the need for reform, the need of openness politically, and I think you're going to see that that conversation and that dialogue even in the hardest places.

**QUESTION:** We in the Netherlands don't like to be reminded by the fact that Mr. Khan got his original plans on how to build a centrifuge, I think you call it, right in Omilo in the heart of the Netherlands. So let's close that issue if I may, but seriously, if I can just take the time for one or two questions, about the US–Dutch relationship, focusing on our two countries. Holland has been very staunchly supporting the United States in Afghanistan, in Iraq and the coalition, but has now announced it will definitely withdraw the troops from southern Iraq as of March. Was that a disappointment to you?

**SECRETARY RICE:** We understand that the contributions that people have made to Iraq have been difficult, and all of us recognize that the most important thing is to support the Iraqis in their desire and their ability to defend themselves, and we are moving in any case to a new phase. They will still need help from coalition forces, from the multinational force, for some time, but I really do think that the emphasis now is going to be on training Iraqi security forces. And When I was at NATO, I was very heartened by the fact that, going around the table, that was a common theme for everyone, that NATO countries are prepared to train Iraqi security forces. Some will do so out of the country and some will support financially, but I am certain, given the Netherlands' very strong support for the coalition in Iraq, very strong support for the Iraqi people, that the Dutch government will find an appropriate way to support Iraqi security forces.

**QUESTION:** I think they've agreed to at least send twenty five people to train inside Iraq.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes, to train inside Iraq, which is a major thing, and we are looking also of course at what can be done with trust funds and the like. We appreciate greatly what the Netherlands has done in Iraq. They were there at the time when the Iraqis perhaps needed us all most, and now that Iraq is writing its own political future, we look forward to training their security forces.

**QUESTION:** Madam Secretary we have run out of time, it is perhaps a bit unusual, but I wanted to give you a present at the end of this interview [reporter holds up a book], this was given to me recently by somebody. It is an American author, he's written a book about New Amsterdam and the new Netherlands, the colonies that existed before New Amsterdam became New York. And he claims that some of the attitudes then developed, for instance an openness towards foreign immigrants, a tolerance of different religious backgrounds, he claims that this has gone a great way in the United States today. So, true or not, I thought it would be nice to leave you with this.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well thank you so much. I greatly appreciate it. I'll read it, and then we'll come back and talk about it.

**QUESTION:** That would be great, thank you very much.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much.

**QUESTION:** Thank you Madam Secretary.

\*The book is [The Island at the Center of the World](#) by Russell Shorto.

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