



## Interview With Lee Jin Sook of MBC TV

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Seoul, Korea  
March 20, 2005

**QUESTION:** You called North Korea one of the outposts of tyranny. Do you still believe that North Korea is a threat to world peace?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I have to say that I think everybody understands the nature of the North Korean regime. Everybody understands the plight of the North Korean people. And, unfortunately, North Korea has taken what is an opportunity, which is to be a part of the Six Party Talks, to give up their nuclear weapons programs, and to therefore get the respect that they are seeking and the assistance that they need. Instead, they have refused to come back to the talks, they talked about being a nuclear weapons state. So I think the nature of this regime is very clear.

**QUESTION:** Then does that mean that -- well, it is a matter of interpretation, but does that mean that you still -- or your administration still regards North Korea as another dictatorial regime that should be removed?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The issue is what is the fate of the North Korean people. And I don't think there's any way that you would confuse North Korea with a democracy. But the issue at hand is to work with the neighbors here on the Korean Peninsula and in Asia more broadly to deal with what is a security concern, which is that North Korea has nuclear weapons programs, it has in the past hidden those nuclear weapons programs. It broke out of an agreement that was made in 1994 to try and deal with its nuclear weapons programs. And we have a framework for doing that. The neighborhood, so to speak, has established the Six Party Talks and that's what we should be involved in and concerned about now.

**QUESTION:** Regarding the fate of the Six Party Talks, it has been -- it has not been working, as far as we understand, since last September. And to make matters worse, they came out to declare that they are the owner of the nuclear weapons. Do you still believe that the Six Party Talks is still alive?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the Six Party Talks are alive as long as the members of the Six Party Talks want them to be alive. And the only question right now is does North Korea want them to be alive? Everybody else, China, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Russia, has been calling for a resumption of the Six Party Talks.

So North Korea is isolated in this regard. And let's review where we are in the Six Party Talks. The North Koreans have been told by the President of the United States, by former Secretary Powell, by myself, that no one wants -- the United States does not desire or intend to invade or attack North Korea. The proposal that the United States was in the context of the Six Party Talks put forward was a proposal that would give to the North Koreans security assurances within the Six Party framework. And we've talked about studying North Korean energy needs. Others have talked about providing fuel. There is a lot on the table if the North Koreans want to respond.

**QUESTION:** So you're saying that the ball is in North Korea's court. If North Korea continues to insist that it's upon the United States, depends on the U.S. attitude and real position, is it possible for the U.S. government, the Bush administration, to put the security guarantee for North Korea in writing for that matter?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the security guarantees within the Six Party Talks, once North Korea has made a strategic decision, I'm certain there's going to be something written down about security assurances. But the problem is that that can't happen without a strategic decision on North Korea's part.

North Korea has been trying to change the subject to make it about rhetoric or to make it about something that was said about them. What needs to be said to North Korea is: there is a proposal on the table, react to that proposal within the Six Party framework and let's move on from there. Because there is a path for North Korea to better relations with the international community if they are prepared to make a strategic choice about their nuclear weapons program.

**QUESTION:** So if North Korea insists -- if the status quo continues, do you have other measures other than Six Party Talks? Are you saying that if that is "continued," is it possible for the U.S. administration to take this matter to the Security Council?

**SECRETARY RICE:** There are always other measures. But we believe at this point that the Six Party Talks can work if we all use our joint leverage and our joint effort to bring North Korea back to the talks and back to the talks in a spirit to actually make them work and move forward.

**QUESTION:** In principle everybody, I think, all the members of the Six Party Talks, agree that it is necessary for the members of that five countries of the Six Party Talks to bring North Korea back to the table. But the problem is -- the question is, how? What is your suggestion?

**SECRETARY RICE:** North Korea should just come back to the table. There's a proposal on the table. It offers a path for North Korea to the respect that they are seeking, to the assistance that they need. It offers an opportunity to lower tensions between North Korea and its neighbors. It offers, if they are prepared to make a choice, of security assurances. And it offers a better path with all of North Korea's neighbors. So they should simply come back to the talks. There is a lot on the table that they could take advantage of.

**QUESTION:** And if they don't?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well then we will see. Like I said, there are always other means, but we believe that the Six Party Talks work best for now.

**QUESTION:** Do these other means include a military option?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I'm not going to go into speculating about what might be possible. But, of course, there are other means.

**QUESTION:** I would like to tell you about the younger generation in Korea. Obviously, I'm sure that you know the attitude of the younger generation in Korea. And you met some of the younger generation of Korea yesterday immediately after your arrival. And they think that the United States should be more flexible in dealing with North Korea's nuclear matter. And, for that matter, they think that according to several polls, the United States -- what they call unilateralism is more dangerous, a bigger threat to world peace than North Korea's nuclear programs. What is your opinion on that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the United States and South Korea have been friends now for more than 50 years. It is because the United States remained devoted to this region and provided peace and stability that you have here the kind of environment that has allowed the South Korean people who are intelligent and who are resourceful and who are industrious, to create a South Korea that is democratic and prosperous and able to live in this wonderful place. That is what the friendship between the United States and Korea has done.

And we respect the fact that this is valid democracy and, of course, people are going to hold different views. And I'm an academic, a university professor, and I know that young people are very strong in expressing their views and thinking about these matters. I think that's a very healthy development.

But I have to say that the United States has always been a force for the ability in the world for democracy to emerge, for prosperity to emerge. That's been our history. If you look at what is happening, for instance, now in Iraq, Afghanistan, there are people that are emerging from very brutal regimes to take their place on the street. That's what the United States has done for us.

**QUESTION:** If you think that what the United States has done in Iraq is the right thing for the Iraqi people, the people in Iraq and that region for that matter, do you believe that democracy should be extended to North Korea? And if you believe that, how do you think that the U.S. can do that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I believe all people deserve to be free. No one deserves to live without the ability to say what you think and to educate your children, both boys and girls, and to have a prosperous life. It's human dignity that -- human dignity is served when people are free. But it's not as if the United States is going to go around the world and try and do all of this by military force. The Iraq situation was unique. We had in Iraq a long time conflict with Saddam Hussein's regime. We had been to war with Saddam Hussein's regime in 1991 when he invaded and occupied his neighbor, Kuwait. We had been in a state of hostilities with him for 12 years. He kept refusing the international community's desires. And so Iraq is a very special case.

And so we believe that democracy works best when it comes from within. There are many ways to have democracy emerge. I would just remind people that the biggest -- in many ways, the biggest tyranny, the largest tyrannical regime out there was in many ways the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had 30,000 nuclear weapons, had 5 million men under arms, and one day it collapsed because we stayed strong in our deterrent to Soviet military power with our allies in Europe because there was a model for the people of Eastern Europe to aspire to, and because we stayed true to the values. And it was not a military confrontation with the Soviet Union that brought the Soviet Union down, it was that the Soviet Union lost the struggle for ideas.

**QUESTION:** In Korea, we are thinking about the Libyan model and about the Iraq model. If you can compare North Korea with Iraq or Libya, what do you think it is? Do you think North Korea is close to Libya or Iraq?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, every situation is different. But let me just describe how we see the Libya model. We see the Libya model as a positive model in which the Libyan government made a strategic decision to give up its weapons of mass destruction, and they were dismantled and verifiably within a matter of months. After that, if you just look at what now Libya is able to do, the lifting of commercial sanctions has meant that business and investment is beginning to flow into Libya. The United States has had high-level visitors to Libya in the last few months. Libya is beginning to emerge as a place in the international system where everybody wants to do business. And the Libyan people are going to be better off for it. So Libya is a very positive model of how this can be done when a state is prepared to make a strategic choice.

**QUESTION:** I think I have to wrap up the interview. But thank you for talking to us and to the Korean people.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you.

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