



## Interview With You Yeon Chae of KBS TV

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Seoul, Korea  
March 20, 2005

**QUESTION:** Let me go straight to the point, the North Korean issue. On February 10th, North Korea declared it had nuclear weapons. How do you evaluate the North Koreans' nuclear weapons capacity?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I think for a long time we have assumed that the North Koreans might have some kind of nuclear capacity. But the important point is that North Korea's neighbors have said very clearly to North Korea that they should abandon their nuclear ambitions, that they should dismantle the programs that they have verifiably, and the Six Party Talks provide a framework in which North Korea can, if they are willing to do that, get the respect that they obviously want and the assistance that they need.

**QUESTION:** The Six Party framework has been at a standstill, as you know, and North Korea is suggesting that the climate will be improved if you withdrew your remarks of past time. Do you have any willingness to withdraw?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The North Koreans are trying to change the subject from the fact that they need to dismantle their nuclear weapons programs. The nature of the North Korean regime is known to everyone. But the issue here is not rhetoric with North Korea. The issue here is that it is time for North Korea to make a strategic choice to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs, to therefore be able to receive assistance in the way that North Korea needs it, and that the North Korean people most certainly need it.

**QUESTION:** Some indicate that U.S. lacks ability to make a breakthrough at this juncture. Is there any chance for you to be more flexible?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The United States and the rest of the parties to the Six Party talks have a proposal on the table, to which the North Koreans have never responded. I think we could start with a North Korean response. Let's review where we are in the Six Party Talks. The North Koreans have been told by the President of the United States, former Secretary of State Colin Powell and now by myself that we have no intention to attack North Korea or invade North Korea. The six parties are prepared to give the North Koreans security assurances in the context of the Six Party Talks. There is an offer on the table to review North Korea's energy needs. We, the United States, have been one of the largest humanitarian assistance donors to the North Korea -- a fact that we do not -- we don't link our humanitarian assistance to what is going on in the Six Party Talks, but it shows that we care for the North Korean people. So the North Koreans have a proposal on the table and I think the issue is: can they respond to that proposal?

**QUESTION:** As you mentioned here, the U.S. has strongly asked North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. What kind of steps should North Korea take if they have any intentions to abandon it?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The first step would be to simply come back to the Six Party Talks and to say that they have made a strategic choice to abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions, to abandon and therefore dismantle and verifiably -- dismantle verifiably all of their nuclear weapons programs. That means both plutonium and highly enriched uranium programs. And then to set up verification measures to do that. It's really a quite simple task ahead for North Korea if they are prepared to make a strategic choice. But they really have not yet made a strategic choice. Instead, they have done exactly the opposite. They have walked out of the Six Party Talks. They have said that they are a nuclear weapon state. And this is all in direct -- a direct rejection of the desire of their neighbors to have a nuclear free Korean Peninsula.

**QUESTION:** Libya is cited as a good example of abandoning nuclear programs through diplomacy. Do you think that way could be effective on North Korea too?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, even though every situation is different, Libya has demonstrated several things. First of all, Libya did make a strategic choice. And in a very quick period of time, a very short period of time, the Libyan programs were dismantled, the equipment was dismantled. The United States and Great Britain have established very forward-leaning programs and policies toward Libya. Oil companies and other businesses are going into Libya in large numbers to begin activities that they could not have begun had Libya not given up its nuclear weapons programs. The American Assistant Secretary of State has been to Libya. Things are happening for Libya because Libya has chosen a path that gave up their weapons programs and reentered the international community.

**QUESTION:** U.S. representative to the Six Party Talks Christopher Hill presented a possible failure of the Six Party framework. Do you agree with that view?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, one has to simply say that the Six Party Talks are the best way to resolve this. But we also cannot simply afford to stand by and have a nuclear-armed Korean Peninsula with North Korea with nuclear weapons. So obviously, the Six Party Talks we are going to pursue them, we believe they can work. We will have to look at other steps if they cannot work. For now, we believe that we have a chance to make them work.

**QUESTION:** And your counterpart, Minister Ban Ki Moon, suggested very much patience was needed. How about you? And do you make any deadline for your patience?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, there's no deadline, certainly. Diplomacy shouldn't operate as much as possible on deadlines. But we can't also have endless patience. The North Koreans aren't standing still. Even though they refuse to talk to their neighbors in the Six Party Talks, even though they refuse to take the path that is there for them, they continue to apparently improve their nuclear capability, they continue to talk about the fact that they are improving their nuclear capability. And so at some point, we might have to make a decision as to whether or not the North is serious about making a strategic choice.

**QUESTION:** Exactly five days ago, (inaudible) has been enlightened by South Korea's electricity. And Korean government would make full progress in any case. Are you supportive or negative of this progress?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we certainly support North-South reconciliation. We've said that to governments and to the government of President Roh. We do note that South Korea has talked about the importance of a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula. And that a nuclear weapon state in North Korea would be a grave concern to the South Korean people.

So this all needs to be kept in mind as relations move forward. But we understand as well that there are deep emotions. We respect those emotions. We understand that there is a deep concern for the North Korean people. And so the key here is to respect and support North-South reconciliation but to understand the context which is a North Korea that seems insistent on moving forward on a nuclear weapon.

**QUESTION:** We have a short time now and let me ask something about South Korea. I guess you are aware of Tokto issue with Japan. And the U.S. Embassy had

released media documents in which Tokto as well as Takeshima were written together. And what is your stance on this?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The United States cannot take a position on this. We would really hope that these two democracies, Japan and South Korea, can deal with this effectively, that the fact that they are democracies would allow them to deal with it effectively. And we believe that we, South Korea, Japan, the United States, have made a lot of progress over the years in providing an environment in the Asia-Pacific region and here in Northeast Asia in particular that allows for economic prosperity, that allows for political cooperation, that allows us to work to resolve differences over difficult issues in security. And so we would certainly hope that the democracies can deal with this.

**QUESTION:** Yesterday in Japan, you offered support for the Japanese permanent membership in U.N. Security Council. And our government seems to be a little bit embarrassed to hear that comment at this critical point. And do you think, is it appropriate to comment like that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the United States first said that it would support Japan for a permanent seat in the Security Council back in the summer, back in August. And we've been supporting Japan for some time in this question.

I think we'd have to recognize that Japan is the second largest contributor to the United Nations, a very major financial contributor to the United Nations. It has taken on global responsibilities. It is important that Security Council reform take place. But we've also said that Security Council reform has to take place in the context of larger reform of the United Nations. And so we're just at the beginning of the process of United Nations reform. We look forward to the report of U.N. Secretary General Annan. We look forward to consultations going forward. But it has been our position for some time that Japan should have a permanent seat.

**QUESTION:** This will be the last question. You indicate that the relationship between South Korea is as strong as it's ever been. But some people in the States, such as so-called neo-cons seems to have some skepticism about our traditional relationship. What is the state of the relationship of the two countries now?

**SECRETARY RICE:** This is a very strong relationship and a very good relationship. It's one of the reasons I wanted to come here early in my time as Secretary of State because this is a relationship that has provided a peaceful environment for economic development, for the emergence of a strong and vital and democratic South Korea. It is also a relationship that has allowed us to work as allies, not just on the security issues of Asia, but to begin to look to global responsibilities. And I think that the United States and the Iraqi people are very grateful for the role that South Korea has played in Iraq. And I hope that the South Korean people are proud of their forces there who are helping the Iraqi people to democracy. And in Afghanistan, South Korea is in command of a provincial reconstruction team, which is helping the Afghan people.

So this is a broad and deep relationship, a friendship based on democratic values, and our shared experiences now over the last more than 50 years of helping to bring peace and stability to this region.

**QUESTION:** Thank you very much.

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

**QUESTION:** And I hope you have a good trip.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you. Thank you.

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