



Interview With James Rosen of Fox News Channel

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Beijing, China
July 10, 2005

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, thank you for your time as always. We've had this big announcement that the North Koreans are going to return to the six-party talks later this month. You know what some people are going to say, you know what some people perhaps in your own party are going to say, that the North is just going to use these next round of talks to buy more time and augment its nuclear arsenal.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we've made very clear that we don't intend to engage in talks for talk's sake. Yes, it has taken a lot of effort to get the North back to the talks. And I might say not really effort by the United States, an effort by everybody involved in the six-party talks. Because the one thing that is very clear is that the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a problem for the whole region. That's why the six-party framework is the right framework.

We expect people to come ready to make progress, and I made that very clear in my discussions here today with my colleagues here in China. I expect to have good consultations in Japan and South Korea. We're ready to roll up our sleeves, James, to have intensive diplomacy, to get this done. Chris Hill is going to continue his consultations here. He's the six-party negotiator and the Assistant Secretary. But, yes, these shouldn't be talks for talk's sake.

QUESTION: What, as we say at Passover time, why is this night different from all other nights? Why is this round different from all other rounds? Were the same pledges not made before the last three rounds?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we will have to see. And, indeed, I do believe that North Korea has a bar to pass to show that it's really interested in and determined to give up its nuclear weapons.

Now, I will say that, in their announcement, they went to say that they wanted to make progress. That was not prompted; they made that point. But I'm going to talk with the Chinese further about this. State Counselor Tung is on his way to Pyongyang as a special envoy of President Hu and I would hope that everyone would make very clear to North Korea that we need to make progress.

QUESTION: That famous quote of yours, "outpost of tyranny," when you said it, did you have any idea it would one day become such a point of contention for the North Koreans?

SECRETARY RICE: I have said many times I think the issue with the North Koreans is getting back to the talks. And the issue there has been that the six-party framework is not always one that the North enjoys being a part of. Because, indeed, it is focused on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and, of course, the state with nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula is North Korea. And so I'm glad that we've gotten past the excuses and glad we've gotten past all the different reasons and that we are going to take this important first step and get going.

QUESTION: Was anything special needed to get past their pique over that comment?

SECRETARY RICE: This has been an intensive round of diplomacy. I was out here just weeks after being named Secretary, and I remember working through this as the North had said, on February 10th, I think it was, that they weren't going to return to the talks. Everybody then put in a lot of effort and the last six weeks or so has been particularly intensive. We know that the South Koreans had discussions with North Koreans. In fact, I met with the Unification Minister when he was in Washington to discuss that. I saw my Japanese and Russian colleagues at the G8 ministerial in London a few weeks ago. Everyone has been very intensively engaged. So we have every reason to believe that they've come back because everybody has told them that it's really time to come back.

QUESTION: Do you regret using that phrase?

SECRETARY RICE: James, I think everybody understands what we -- our concerns about the North Koreans have been, including about its human rights record. That's on the record. It's very clear.

QUESTION: We're still a long way from the goal though, correct? You said earlier today this is only a first step. What did you mean by that?

SECRETARY RICE: I meant that we should not spend too much time celebrating the fact that we're going back to the talks. It's a good thing that we're going back to the talks. In fact, you can't make progress if you're not in the talks. But our focus now is going to be on how to make progress there. There is a proposal on the table, many elements which I think would be very favorable for the North, including a proposal that there could be six-party security guarantees if that is a concern of the North, that we would be prepared to look at the North's energy needs. In fact, the South Koreans have even talked more about how that might look. We have talked about the fact that the plight of the North Korean people is something of a concern to everyone for humanitarian and other reasons.

So there is plenty on the table for the North. We're interested in hearing their ideas. We're interested in hearing their response to this proposal. And let's move ahead. But this is just a first step.

QUESTION: Correct me if I'm wrong. These talks are aimed at getting North Korea to verifiably dismantle its nuclear program. But these talks do not address the question of North Korea as a proliferator of technology?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the first point and the first step is that North Korea should not possess or produce nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons material or anything associated with nuclear weapons. And in fact, James, in 1991 they made that pledge to South Korea. So this has been a pledge that has been on the table for a long time. That would, of course, help to address the proliferation risk if in fact this really was a situation in which North Korea were so to speak nuclear free.

But of course we continue to address proliferation concerns in other ways as well. We have a proliferation security initiative, which is active, not just to see what North Korea is doing, but to deal with any trade in the proliferation of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction materials. And, of course, we also are taking action against companies and entities that we believe may be involved in proliferation trade.

QUESTION: How extensive has North Korea's provision of nuclear technology to Iran been?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I can't really answer that with any precision. I think it's well known that we have concerns about North Korea's provision of certainly missile

technology broadly across the world, and worries about what else may be transferred. But this is the reason that we need to enhance our intelligence cooperation with others, that we do need to rely on the Proliferation Security Initiative, and that it has been useful to have the A.Q. Khan network wrapped up. Because as the kind of black market entrepreneur in these technologies, there were clearly some connections to these programs and we're learning about them through A.Q. Khan.

QUESTION: In my business, it's all about the segue. So now, having asked about North Korea providing technology to Iran, I want to segue to Iran. Last week, the State Department spokesman and the White House spokesman told the public that there was a government-wide effort under way to determine whether or not the new president-elect of Iran was connected to the 1979 hostage crisis in some way. What has that investigation found?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we are still looking into it and trying to do as thorough a job as we possibly can to establish what relationship there might have been. The point that I would make, James, is that we are not going to forget what happened to our people in Iran, and in fact the international community should not forget that, because the wanton taking of diplomats in that way is a threat to the very foundation of diplomatic representation and to the international system. And so that's why we take it so seriously. We don't really have at this point a "firm" conclusion, but we take it very, very seriously.

QUESTION: I have one last question I'd like to get to. And then, as you know, I have a fondness for doing an off-the-charts question.

SECRETARY RICE: Always, yes. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I know you're fond of them, too. Let's not pretend that you're not.

SECRETARY RICE: I'm just wondering what this one is going to be. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: It can only go up. The last policy or serious governmental question I wanted to ask was about the London bombings. Foreign Secretary Straw said that the bombings in London were "al Qaeda related." I know that you want to defer to the U.K. authorities and not pronounce on aspects of the investigation. But I guess my question for you is, how many other groups are there outside of al Qaeda and its affiliates that would be capable of mounting an attack like this?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the problem now is that there appear to be a number of groups that are associated with this extremist group that seem to be capable of these kinds of attacks. I -- you're absolutely right, I would defer to the British in terms of who did this or any information that there might be. But I will say that it has a kind of eerie familiarity to it for the kind of thing that happened in Madrid. And so we're trying to help the British in any way we can.

But it just reminds us James that this is a fight that is not done. This is a terrible tragedy in Britain and our hearts and prayers go out to the families of the victims, to those who are injured and are still trying to recover, and indeed to the British people, because we know something of the anger and agony that something like this brings on.

But of course it strengthens our resolve, too, not to let these people terrorize us and to try to change our way of life. It's why we need to recognize that as much as we're trying to do to secure the homeland, we're doing a great deal, the Brits have done a great deal, it's a somewhat unfair fight because they only have to be right once; we have to be right 100 percent of the time. And it's why the President and, indeed, Prime Minister Blair have felt so strongly that we have to fight the War on Terror on the offense, that we have to go after them where they are and, ultimately, in the long run, change the very circumstances that brought this kind of extremism about.

QUESTION: At the moment, it reeks of al Qaeda or its affiliates, doesn't it?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, it has a familiar ring. But again, I think we'll wait for the British, who are trying to put all the details together, and have many sources to try and determine (inaudible).

QUESTION: All right. I'll be brief and merciful. What movie have you watched the most number of times.

SECRETARY RICE: Oh, my. What movie have I watched the most number of times? Well, there are probably a couple. Casablanca I watch whenever it comes on.

QUESTION: What do you like about it?

SECRETARY RICE: Oh, come on, "Here's looking at you kid," who doesn't love that line? I love Humphrey Bogart. I love everything about that movie. It's in many ways my favorite movie. But I'll give you a real scoop. I've also watched 'The Way We Were' and 'Trading Places' many, many times.

QUESTION: All right, that's an eclectic mix for sure.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, yes. My problem is that I generally don't watch movies of redeeming value; I tend to take them as entertainment.

QUESTION: Spiderman II, you saw that?

SECRETARY RICE: I did. I liked it.

QUESTION: Do you ever wish you were a superhero?

SECRETARY RICE: Sometimes, sure.

QUESTION: Do you think it's important for this country at some point -- let me start that over, because we're in a different country.

Do you think it's important for the United States at some point to have an African American female on the Supreme Court?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I have always believed that the United States is doing extremely well, given our history, in breaking all kinds of ceilings and all kinds of taboos. I don't know when there will be an African American female on the Supreme Court. I think there will be.

I just remind people that, as hard as our history has been, I'll bet many people haven't thought about the fact that it's been a while since there was actually a white male Secretary of State -- Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell and now me. Maybe you want to talk about that one James. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I've got plenty of time.

Do you believe -- this will be our last one. Do you believe that Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin of President Kennedy?

SECRETARY RICE: I have no idea. And I've actually never -- never been a conspiracy theorist, a person who read those stories very much. I was a little girl when John Kennedy was assassinated. And all I remember was the horror involved. That's all that stays with me.

QUESTION: The horror of it?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes. The horror of it.

QUESTION: Studies show that 80 percent of Americans believe there was a conspiracy. Why do you think that's such a popular thing?

SECRETARY RICE: I don't know. And I've never spent any time thinking about it.

QUESTION: Thank you for your time as always.

2005/T11-4

Released on July 10, 2005

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