



Interview by Atsushi Hatayama of Nippon Television

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Tokyo, Japan
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MR. HATAYAMA: Let me go directly regarding to the question. Why do you think that North Korea has decided to come back to the six-party talks?

SECRETARY RICE: I believe that the North Koreans are finally recognizing that the entire world, and particularly their neighbors, are saying to them that the only course open to them is through the six-party talks to deal with the issue of their nuclear weapons program. This is really the concerted effort of all of the members of the six-party talks: the South Koreans, the Chinese, the Japanese, I know the Russians have had conversations with the North Koreans and we have. And so the North Koreans, I believe, finally realized that everyone is united in saying that this is the only approach that they can use. Now we will see if they are ready to negotiate seriously when they come.

MR. HATAYAMA: Well, we are disappointed that Japan was not named at your press conference in Beijing but you mentioned Japan, so maybe this will be good news for us.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, earlier I had talked about the fact that I had had discussions with Foreign Minister Machimura when we were in London about the six-party talks, and so this is really the concerted effort of all of the members of the six-party talks, or at least of the five parties, to get the North Koreans back to the table.

MR. HATAYAMA: Well, North Korean official news agency has announced that DPRK interpreted the U.S. Government high official's remark -- recent remarks -- as something that treated with respect, but personally Secretary, does that mean that you -- you agreed to this and does that mean that you have modified your attitude toward them, which was shown in your expression an "outpost of tyranny"?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, everyone understands our views of the North Korean regime and everyone is concerned about the human rights situation there. Japan has special human rights concerns when it comes to the abductee issue and we've been very supportive of Japan's efforts to resolve favorably that really difficult humanitarian situation. So everyone understands the views of the North Korean regime.

We've stated several facts. First, that North Korea is sovereign. This is obvious in the fact that North Korea is a member of the United Nations. We're in negotiations with them. Clearly, they're sovereign. Secondly, the President stated all the way back in 2002 that the United States had no intention to invade or attack North Korea, and so we have restated that. And I'm very glad that the North Korean regime has taken note of these statements.

MR. HATAYAMA: You said at the press conference in Beijing that the goal of the next round of talk is not only to resume the talks but to make progress.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

MR. HATAYAMA: What do you mean by that? When do you feel comfortable? What kind of progress is needed?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the point is that we can't just go back to the talks and have everyone continue to talk. These talks have had an unfortunate pattern, which is that we meet for a couple of days, they break up, really nothing has been achieved, and we wait three months or six months or in this case another year until the talks resume, and during that period of time North Korea is improving its nuclear capability. Well, that's really not acceptable.

And so we have to have some evidence that the North is really prepared to make a strategic choice to give up its nuclear weapons. That's what everybody is seeking. When I was in China, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed that the goal of these talks, from the point of view of Beijing, is the non-nuclear Korean Peninsula. And so we need to have some evidence that we're moving forward on that. These are negotiations, so we are happy to sit and talk about how to make progress, but we really do have to have some indication that the North is really prepared to make a commitment.

MR. HATAYAMA: Okay. You touched the abduction issue. Japanese Government is trying to bring up this issue somehow during the next round of talk, but North Korea hates it and even South Korea voices concerns that this will be in the way for the success of the talk. What is your idea?

SECRETARY RICE: I think everybody understands that we want to deal with the nuclear issue and that everybody needs a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, and that is obviously our primary goal here. But the United States has never made any secret of the fact that there are other issues that have to be resolved in the broader context of what we are trying to do for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. For instance, we have brought up not just human rights issues like abductees, human rights issues which are very important, but also issues like the missile proliferation in which North Korea engages or their conventional force balance which, of course, is an issue for American forces. So it should surprise no one that the nuclear issue is not the end of the story, although obviously when we resume these talks, we'll be looking to make progress on that issue principally.

MR. HATAYAMA: Let's change subjects. The situation in Iraq has been deteriorating day by day. Doesn't that show -- and the London attacks came. Doesn't that show that the U.S. fight against terrorism has been unsuccessful?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, first of all, I think on London, it just reminds us that there are still horrible enemies who are determined. We just have to be more determined. And the fact is that they have an unfair advantage when we're fighting on the defense: We have to be right 100 percent of the time; they have to be right once. And the terrible tragedy in London, our hearts go out to the people of London and Great Britain. It's just a reminder that there is still work to do.

But we, of course, have made progress. It is absolutely the case that the fact that there is now a legitimate government in Afghanistan that fights on our side in the war on terrorism is a major step forward. But that government needs to be supported. It needs to be strengthened. It will have parliamentary elections. Iraq, where the terrorists understand that when there is a stable and democratic Iraq it will be a very devastating blow to their ideology of hatred, is a difficult situation but by no means do I think it has deteriorated.

In fact, I would argue that while, yes, the evil people who want to blow up innocent people can do that with car bombs and they can grab the headlines, but it's a lot harder to see the quiet process of political reconciliation that is going on in Iraq, where they have already had elections, formed a government, they're writing a constitution, and then they're going to have elections for a permanent government. You defeat insurgencies politically as well as militarily and the Iraqi people are moving forward on their future and they're going to succeed.

MR. HATAYAMA: Are you going to ask Japanese Government to keep the Self-Defense Forces in southern Iraq after the December -- mid-December schedule?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, of course, it will be a matter for Japan to decide how it can continue to support the Iraqi people. I would just note that Japan has been steadfast in its support of the Iraqi people through its humanitarian efforts there, the humanitarian efforts of the Self-Defense Forces, and the Foreign Minister Machimura was with me in Brussels when the world gave support to the Iraqis. So I know that Japan will find a way to continue to support the Iraqi people.

MR. HATAYAMA: One last question about the UN Security Council reform. The G-4 has submitted their proposals, which are far apart from U.S. own idea. How are you going to handle this?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the UN reform in the broadest sense is extremely important. This is a 60-year-old organization that is the principal means for multilateral peace and security in the world. We have to reform it.

It is also true that as a part of those broad reforms we need to reform the Security Council. It cannot continue to look like it did in 1945. And the United States has been very clear that we support Japan for a permanent seat because Japan has earned that.

Now, the timing of how we look at Security Council reform in the context of larger reform is really the issue here. I think that there is a lot of work to be done, there are a lot of discussions to be held, about how Security Council reform can go forward. We don't oppose any candidacy for Security Council. The problem for us is that we do believe that there needs to be progress on broader reform into which the context -- into which Security Council reform could be built.

So we support Japan and the G-4 proposal has some interesting aspects, but as to timing, we do need some progress on these other reform measures before we try and expand the Security Council.

MR. HATAYAMA: How about the veto issue?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, it's our view that the Security Council can expand without the need for further vetoes. The important issue -- and you learn this when you work with the UN -- is the Security Council works as a whole; it is not all that often that people are forced to veto, and so membership on the Security Council, I think, is really the important issue.

MR. HATAYAMA: Thank you very much, Secretary, for your time.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much. Good to be with you.

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