



Interview With Kiyas Moldokasymov of Kyrgyz National TV

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
October 11, 2005

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* Dear Madame Rice, you are very welcome to Kyrgyzstan. And you came to Kyrgyzstan after the revolution of March 24th. What does the U.S. Government think of the post-revolution and a democratic process? Do you think that Kyrgyzstan is following a democratic path?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I've been -- as most people in the world have been very impressed with the fact of the Tulip Revolution and then the elections that took place. And Kyrgyzstan now has an opportunity to build a stable democracy. It is a long path, but it's not an easy path. But it is a path on which, I believe, Kyrgyzstan has definitely begun.

The constitutional reform that is about to take place is extremely important. Fighting corruption is very important and economic reform so that the Kyrgyz people can have a better way of life is also critical and the United States will try to be a partner for Kyrgyzstan in all of those aspects.

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* Former President Askar Akayev who fled the country to Moscow during the popular revolution has said that the revolution took place with the help of American assistance. However, Kyrgyz politicians and government did not agree with this. At the recent UN summit U.S. President Bush admitted that the U.S. Government directly supported the revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Do you really think the Kyrgyz revolution happened with American assistance?

SECRETARY RICE: The United States supports the people of these countries as they decide to pursue democracy -- in Ukraine, in Georgia that was the case and also in Kyrgyzstan. And so this was a revolution that was carried out by the Kyrgyz people, not by the people of the United States. The United States has provided support to build civil society, to help the development of political parties, but we absolutely do not have any role in choosing Kyrgyzstan's leaders, in choosing what Kyrgyzstan's constitution will look like. These are issues only for the Kyrgyz people. And the United States wants to be a moral support, of economic support, of political support, but we are not the ones who carried out the revolution, the Tulip Revolution. That was the Kyrgyz people.

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* You say that the American Government was supporting Kyrgyz society and political parties and you said Kyrgyzstan will move forward on the path of democracy. What can we expect -- what is assistance from the United States?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the United States, along with others, like the European Union, have offered technical assistance in helping to develop the institutions of democracy, in helping to develop civil society. Any strong democracy has an important and strong civil society. And I have to say I was impressed today in a session that I did on constitutional reform with the strong voice of civil society here in Kyrgyzstan. As so that's the kind of help that we will provide on the political side, but it is not to choose any one party or to choose any one candidate. That is not our role. The role of choosing who will govern Kyrgyzstan is up to the Kyrgyz people.

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* Your response was mostly about political side of the issue, but I meant more about the economic part. We don't see much of American businessmen here. Can we expect that American business will show more interest in our republic and come to make business here?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes. Well, we are trying to help Kyrgyzstan economically with -- we will be trying to support agricultural development. We will try to support the program that is underway for small business development. When it comes to investment, the real issue is what kind of investment climate can Kyrgyzstan establish so that businesses will want to come here. The United States does not direct its businesses to go anywhere in the world; they choose to go where they have the best business climate. That means a place where they know there is no corruption. A place where they know that there is rule of law. A place where they know that contracts will be observed.

I am quite sure that Kyrgyzstan could be a very popular place to do business. It has an educated population. It has a good infrastructure. But it will need to make economic reforms. We are going to send to work with Prime Minister Kulov and President Bakiyev an economic advisor from the United States to help to stimulate changes that would bring business investment, and so that we will do very soon.

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* Well, one understands that for attracting businessmen we need a stable situation in our region. And in terms of security situation in Central Asia, in general, what exactly does the U.S. plan to do?

SECRETARY RICE: Well we are, first of all, fighting the war on terrorism and we have a good partner in Kyrgyzstan, that is why the coalition forces are at Manas is to be able to fight the war on terrorism. We believe that if we can stabilize further the situation in Afghanistan -- and Afghanistan has made a lot of progress -- that will help in terms of the terrorist situation and also in terms of narcotics, which is a very big problem.

And then with a more stable security environment, which we are working with our partners to create, we believe that regional economic development can take place and that Central Asia could emerge as a very strong region in the international economy.

QUESTION: *(Via Kyrgyz Interpreter)* Thank you very much. You were the first Secretary of State who gave an interview to our Kyrgyz National Television. Thank you very much for your time.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much.

2005/T15-5

Released on October 11, 2005

