



## Remarks En Route to Algiers, Algeria

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Algiers, Algeria

September 6, 2008

**SECRETARY RICE:** Hello. We don't have very much time, because this is a very short trip. I just wanted to come back and say how pleased I am to have received the news of the conclusion of the NSG discussions, the Nuclear Suppliers Group discussions, and, therefore, the passing of an exemption for India.

This is an important step forward. We got a lot of very good help from the Indian government to make this possible, but also from a number of delegations that worked very closely with us. And I think that it is a really very big step forward for the non-proliferation framework.

Everyone knows that India is not a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but I think the fact that Mohamed elBaradei has made the point that this, in fact, expands the reach of the non-proliferation regime, and gives the IAEA -- will give the IAEA -- the kind of access that it has not had, and now, through the Nuclear Suppliers Group, India, the kind of access that it has not had, to civilian nuclear technology is just a very important step forward.

**QUESTION:** How many calls did you make over the last couple of days on the road, here?

**SECRETARY RICE:** A lot. I will have to check. It's a lot.

**QUESTION:** I mean, were you talking to the people in New Zealand and Ireland, and --

**SECRETARY RICE:** I had extensive discussions of this when I was in New Zealand, with the prime minister and the foreign minister. I have talked at least to the Irish, the Austrians, the Chinese. I will get you a list, Glenn, but it's been a lot.

**QUESTION:** And what (inaudible) actually seen? What brought it together in the end?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I don't want to get into the details of the discussions, the negotiations. But let's just say that I think everybody took everyone else's concerns seriously, and we found a way to bridge those concerns.

This was a big step. It is a big step for all states -- and I would include the United States in that -- who value the non-proliferation regime, value the NPT, and this is different. It's an exception. And so it's not surprising that there were concerns. But I think we found ways to bridge those concerns, and I have to say, too, that very much in line with and within the guidelines that the Indian government had represented to its parliament, but yet India showed a lot of leadership.

**QUESTION:** Do you think you will get it through Congress this year?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we will have to see. The congressional calendar is short. But the main thing is the international work is now done. And, obviously, the Hyde Act is there, and I certainly hope we can get it through because it's also a big step for the U.S.-India relationship. It's already a huge step for the U.S.-India relationship. But it would be good to get everything finalized. I will just have to go back and talk to members of Congress.

**QUESTION:** Isn't there a big risk that this would disadvantage American companies because now the NSG has cleared trade so the French and the Russians can go ahead? And if somehow this stalls in Congress, it could become a problem for American --

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I hope we can get it through Congress. But we have talked to the Indian government about this, and I think they recognize and appreciate American leadership on this issue. And because of that, I think we will have ways to talk to them about not disadvantaging American companies. But obviously, the best thing would be to get it through Congress.

**QUESTION:** You were talking about human rights issues in Tunisia --

**PARTICIPANT:** No, no, no, not India, Pakistan --

**SECRETARY RICE:** If anybody has got another India question, let's do that.

**QUESTION:** It looks like the India 123 is passing, just as the Russia 123 is dying. I mean, both of them were seen as tied in to sort of spreading better control of nuclear technologies. How do you sort of assess India going ahead as the Russia 123 is dying?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I think they're different, for one very important reason. Let's remember that Russia is already a member of the NPT, Russia is already a member of the Nuclear Supplier's Group. This agreement will eventually improve the prospects for U.S. cooperation with Russia on nuclear issues, nuclear technology.

But the India deal is landmark. It's no secret India has been outside the non-proliferation regime for the entire history of its program. So, in that sense, it is more significant, from the point of view of the historic nature of the agreement. It is just not -- the time isn't right for the Russia agreement; we will be making an announcement about that later.

**QUESTION:** Yes, I just wanted to ask you quickly about what you spoke to with Ben Ali, in terms of internal reforms and human rights reforms. Were you specific? Did you raise specific cases? There has been a lot of talk of harassment of dissidents and other --

**SECRETARY RICE:** I think it's fair to say that we had one of the most extensive and far-ranging discussions about issues of internal reform, human rights, political reform -- and again, in a very respectful way -- about media access, about the opposition, and about the upcoming elections in 2009. It was a very extensive and long discussion.

**QUESTION:** Did you ask him to be more open? Did you suggest that they could be more open, as --

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I think Tunisia is an interesting case, because they have made, obviously, a lot of progress on social issues, including women's issues. They have made a lot of progress on economic reforms. There have been some political reforms.

We have been very clear that we would hope that Tunisia will do more, and particularly in the lead-up to the 2009 elections, that media access, freedom of the Internet, access to television for the opposition, will really be enshrined, because while the election day is important, it's also the run-up to the election that makes for free and fair elections. And I thought we had a really very good discussion of that, and I appreciate the president's openness and willingness to discuss it.

**QUESTION:** I just wanted to ask you about the new Pakistani president. What do you --

**SECRETARY RICE:** I am looking forward to working with him. I have talked to him on the phone. I have not met him. But obviously, the civilian government of Pakistan is something that we have welcomed after the free and fair elections.

And now, with the new president, I think we have got a good way forward. I was impressed by some of the things that he said about the challenges that Pakistan faces, about the centrality of fighting terrorism, about the fact that the terrorism fight is Pakistan's fight, and also his very strong words of friendship and alliance with the United States.

**QUESTION:** Can I just ask one more on India? This agreement was tied so much with Prime Minister Singh. I mean, what -- how confident are you that future administrations there will abide by it? And how much risk is there that they may test a nuclear weapon again?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, India has a lot at stake in this agreement. And I don't think that the Indians would have sought this agreement if they did not see that their principal goal now, their principal incentive, is to seek peaceful uses of nuclear materials, to be able to build civil nuclear facilities, and to do that with the best technology from around the world.

And, yes, it has been associated with Prime Minister Singh. But, frankly, I think there is widespread support for this in the business community in India, I think there is widespread support for it in the environmental community, even within some of the opposition I think you find support for this.

And so, once it is done -- and I do want to emphasize we still have to go back to Congress, as Glenn said -- I think you will see that there is really a basis for a very different kind of relationship for India with the rest of the world on these issues.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thanks, everybody.

**2008/T26-6**

Released on September 6, 2008

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